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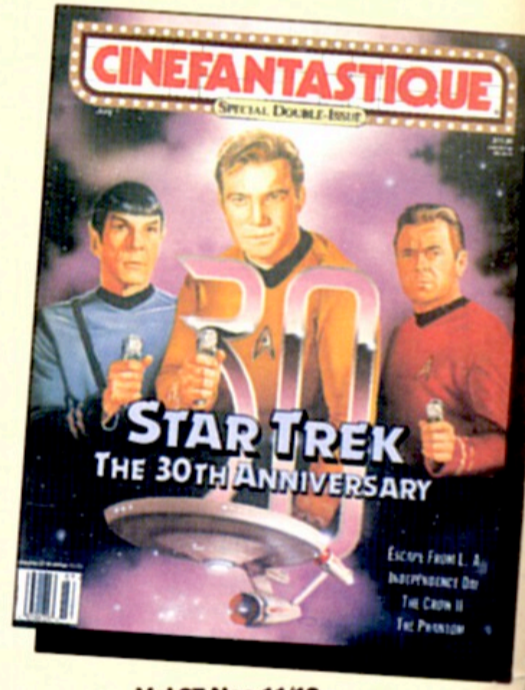
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CONTENTS

VOLUME 31 NUMBER 11

"The Magazine with a Sense of Wonder"

APRIL 2000

Welcome to our annual review of things STAR TREK. Resident Trek expert Anna Kaplan profiles the strides of executive producer Brannon Braga to make STAR TREK: VOYAGER equal the excellent standards of past Trek series THE NEXT GENERATION and DEEP SPACE NINE. As it progresses into its sixth season on the air, VOYAGER is the final frontier's torch carrier, the only Trek series currently airing original episodes. A veteran of THE NEXT GENERATION, Braga is committed to an exacting regimen of script re-writing until the story is right, often delivering pages to the shooting stage as the episodes film. For last season's February sweeps show, among the series' best, Braga pulled a few rabbits out of his hat to make a two hour TV movie battle with the Borg that equalled (and some say) surpassed the Enterprise's feature film Borg encounter FIRST CONTACT.

Kaplan provides exclusive interviews from the set of VOYAGER in Hollywood, including profiles of series stars Jeri Ryan, Robert Picardo, Roxann Dawson, Tim Russ, Garrett Wang and guest star John Savage. Kaplan also chronicles the making of some of the series' finest shows including "Someone To Watch Over Me," "Timeless," the show's 100th episode, "Equinox" and "Memorial," the currently airing February sweeps tribute to creator Gene Roddenberry. With a seventh season still in the cards, VOYAGER no longer seems to be lost in the Delta Quadrant, and is heading home with style.

And on the movie front, this issue provides a sneak peek at a robust spring crop of horror, fantasy and science fiction projects reaching theatre screens nationwide. Disney's MISSION TO MARS stakes out the red planet before Warner Bros competing RED PLANET has a chance to land (look for it this summer). Michael Beeler offers an on-set report from Salt Lake City of the filming of THE CROW: SALVATION, the return of James O'Barr's comic book horror franchise, and Alan Jones reviews Roman Polanski's return to form, THE NINTH GATE.

Frederick S. Clarke



Page 7



Page 8



Page 24



Page 32



Page 56

4 MISSION TO MARS

Walt Disney beats Warner Bros in the race to the red planet, starring Gary Sinise. / Article by Scott Tracy Griffin

6 WHICH PLANET ARE YOU FROM?

Gary Shandling on writing, co-producing and starring as a wacky alien bent on Earthly sexual union. / Interview by Douglas Eby

8 THE CROW: SALVATION

James O'Barr's Crow comes back for a third time, a comic book horror franchise targeting the teen set. / Articles by Michael Beeler

14 EL DORADO

DreamWorks Animation takes inspiration from the Bob Hope and Bing Crosby "Road" picture formula. / Preview by Mike Lyons

16 FREQUENCY

Humanizing SF, fireman Dennis Quaid gets a life-saving message from his policeman son in the future. / Preview by Paul Wardle

20 FINAL DESTINATION

X-FILES alumnists Glen Morgan and James Wong make their teen horror movie debut at New Line. / Preview by Robin Brunet

22 VOYAGER'S "TREK MEMORIAL"

A powerful examination of the devastation of warfare, a February sweeps show a la Gene Roddenberry. / Article by Anna Kaplan

24 STAR TREK: VOYAGER

Veteran producer Brannon Braga on shepherding home his final frontier torch carrier. / Articles by Anna Kaplan

32 VOYAGER'S "DARK FRONTIER"

The making of the series' stunning two-hour movie, plus a look behind the scenes at its amazing visual effects. / Article by Anna Kaplan

40 VOYAGER'S "TIMELESS"

How the cast and crew pulled together to make the show's 100th episode an exciting, bittersweet gem. / Article by Anna Kaplan

56 PITCH BLACK

Writer-director David Twohy and star Vin Diesel on filming the sci-fi creature feature in Australia. / Articles by Joe Fordham

60 THE RETURN OF ROMAN POLANSKI

The director of ROSEMARY'S BABY and REPULSION on his stylish horror film comeback. / Article by Presley Reese

61 POLANSKI'S "THE NINTH GATE"

Johnny Depp stars in Polanski's triumphant return to the horror genre, devilishly good filmmaking. / Review by Alan Jones

Publisher & Editor: Frederick S. Clarke. **Bureaus:** New York/ Dan Persons, Dan Scapperotti. Los Angeles/ Mitch Persons, Douglas Eby. London/ Alan Jones.

Contributors: Michael Beeler, Robin Brunet, Joe Fordham, Scott Tracy Griffin, Anna Kaplan, Mike Lyons, Paul Wardle.

Editorial Operations Manager: Elaine Fiedler. **Editorial Production:** Lisa Tomczak-Walkington, Robert Garcia. **Publisher's Assistant:** Lisa Coduto.

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MISSION TO MARS

Disney beats Warner Bros. in the race to the

By Scott Tracy Griffin

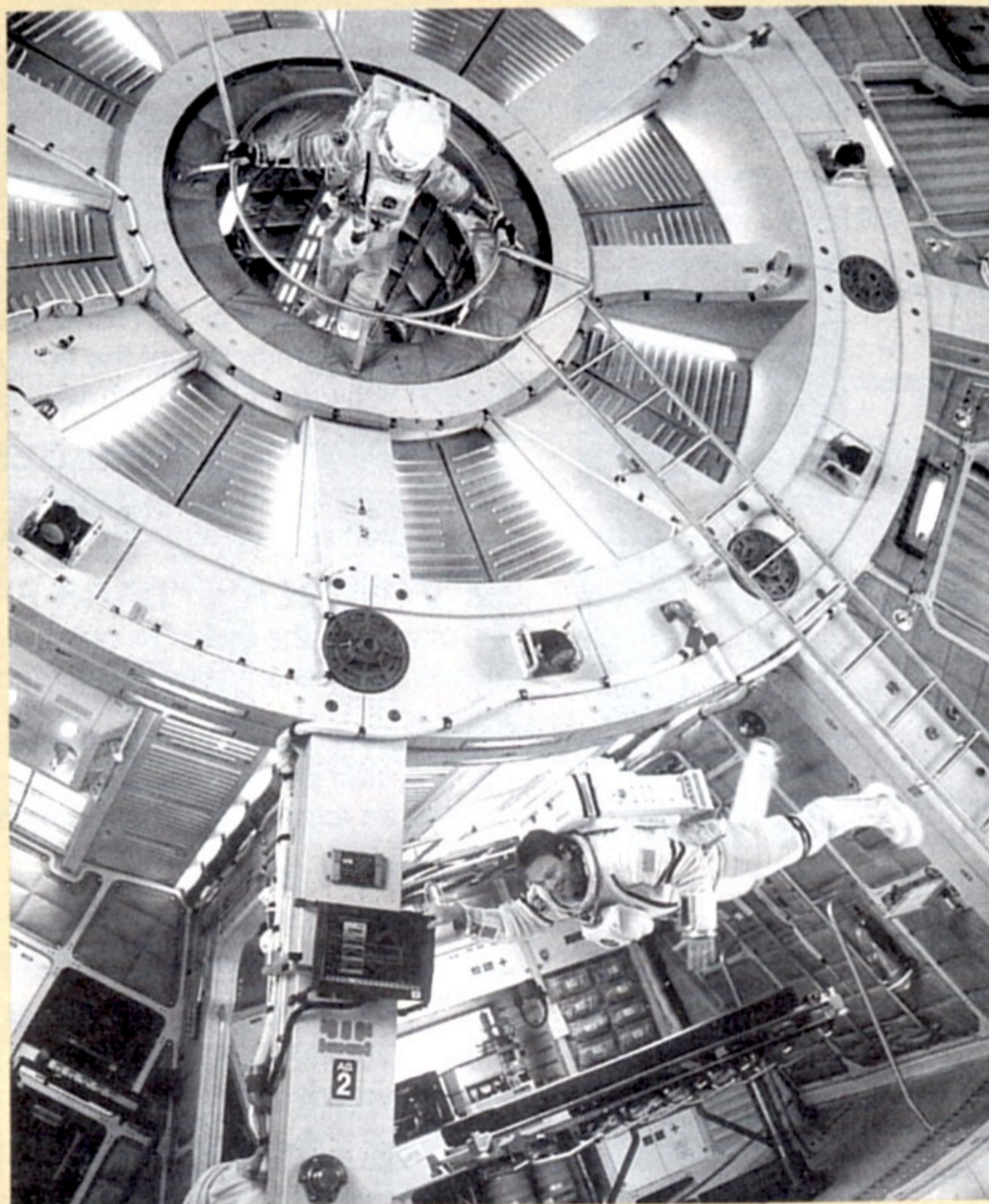
Hollywood has Mars fever. After the spectacular response to NASA's "Pathfinder" mission (a record 220 million hits to NASA's website during the rover's touchdown week, July 4, 1997), studios raced to green-light Mars projects, among them RED PLANET, starring Val Kilmer, slated for Summer 2000, and a Jim Cameron miniseries and IMAX film scheduled to open in 2001. As with 1997's asteroid apocalypse film Deep Impact, Walt Disney Studio leads the pack with its spring release, MISSION TO MARS.

The film's tale revolves around three friends. Astronaut Jim McConnell (Gary Sinise), was slated to be the first man to walk on Mars until a personal tragedy forced him to resign from NASA. The inaugural Mars mission—which includes one of McConnell's best friends, Luc Graham (Don Cheadle)—suffers a catastrophe, and McConnell and the third member of the trio, Woody Blake (Tim Robbins), must lead a rescue mission. Computer whiz Phil Ohlmeyer (Jerry O'Connell) and Woody's medical officer wife, Terri (Connie Nielsen) round out the second crew.

"The story was built around the friendship of these three guys," said producer Tom Jacobson. "We wanted to cast really strong actors that had different personalities, so that we would believe them as NASA astronauts. I'm excited with the cast we've put together."

"I've always been a science fiction aficionado and like the type of science fiction that has drama and human emotion, whether scary or adventurous, that feels real within the context of the story," said Jacobson of his inspiration for the project. "I developed and green-lit several of these movies [while em-

"We take the scientific idea of the search for life and play with it," said producer Tom Jacobson. "We have a speculative ending that pushes those [ideas] a bit."



Nielsen as Dr. Terri Fisher (top) and Gary Sinise as Jim McConnell, who mounts a Mars rescue mission against the better judgement of his NASA superiors.

ployed as President of Worldwide Production] at Fox, including INDEPENDENCE DAY and one of the ALIEN movies, so it was exciting for me to make my own."

Given the current cultural fascination with the Red Planet, it seemed a serendipitous target for their efforts. After conceiving the story

with writer David Goyer, Jacobson's pitch was purchased on the condition that he deliver a worthy script. Jim and John Thomas (PREDATOR, EXECUTIVE DECISION) were hired to write the first draft, with a rewrite by Graham Yost (SPEED, BROKEN ARROW) and final polish by Academy Award winner Ted Tally (SI-

LENCE OF THE LAMBS).

After director Gore Verbinski (MOUSE HUNT) left the project over creative and budgetary differences, Brian DePalma (MISSION IMPOSSIBLE, SNAKE EYES) was tapped to helm the project, based on his "overwhelming passion for the study of Mars." Though the film was a change of genre for DePalma, he delivered the reportedly \$75 million picture ahead of schedule.

"Start from reality and go from there" was the basic design thrust," said production designer Ed Verreaux (CONTACT), of his task. Verreaux and the crew studied books such as aerospace engineer Robert Zubrin's popular tome, *The Case for Mars: The Plan to Settle the Red Planet and Why We Must* to provide scientific accuracy related to space travel and habitats, and Paul Raeburn's *Uncovering the Secrets of the Red Planet* for areographical reference.

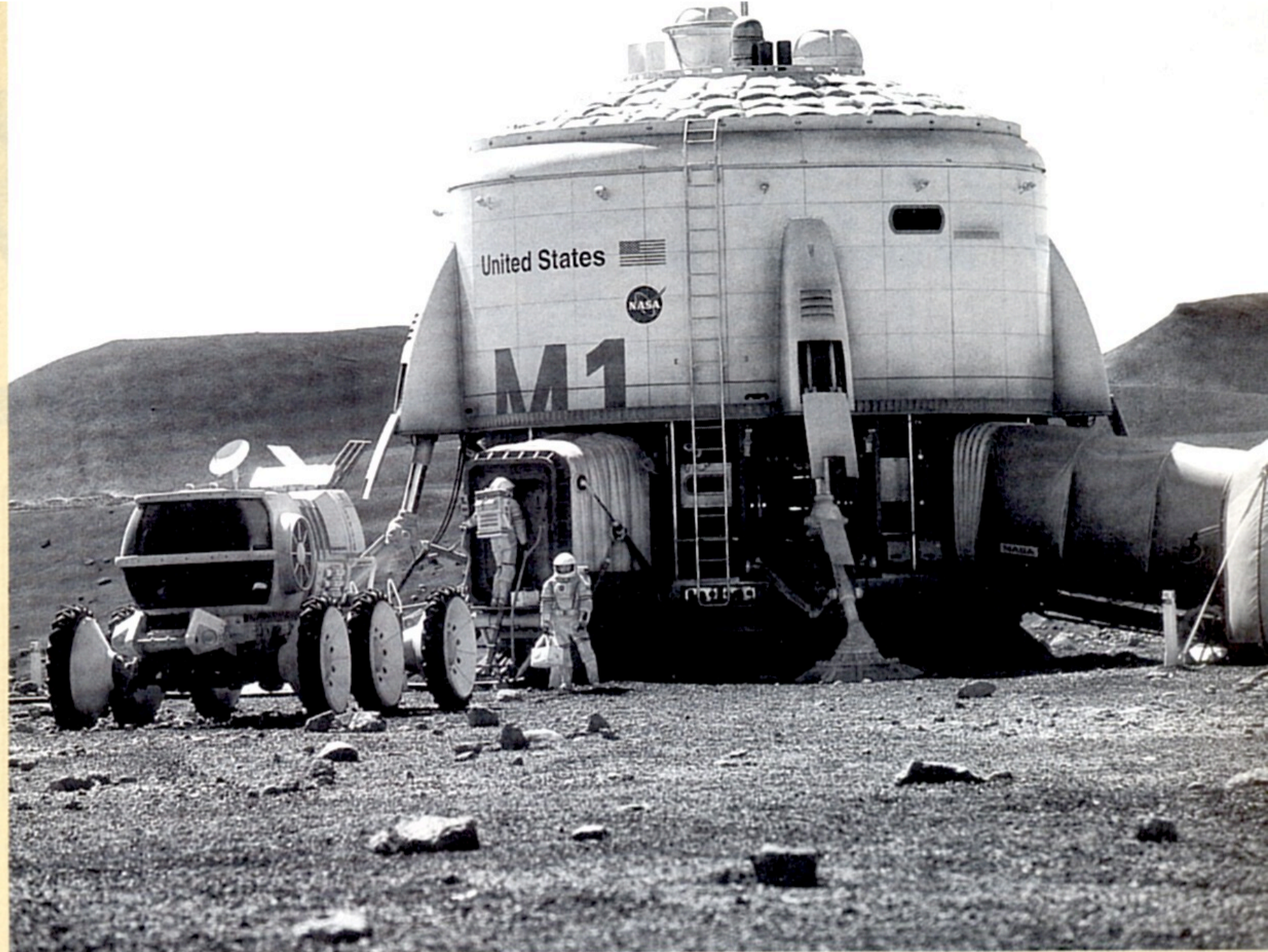
Zubrin's "Mars Direct" plan—a proposal to use existing technology to establish a permanent habitat occupied by a succession of mission crews who will "live off the land" for oxygen and fuel—provided a template for the story, set in 2020. NASA provided a tour of their Houston facilities, answered questions, reviewed the script, and permitted the use of their logos in the officially sanctioned film. Retired Apollo and shuttle astronaut Story Musgrave provided further technical advice. "He was very positive and supportive. It was wonderful to get his take, because he's been [in space]," enthuses Verreaux.

"We created a bunch of Mars fanatics and proselytizers through this movie's production," Jacobson commented, "[When] we all became involved in researching what

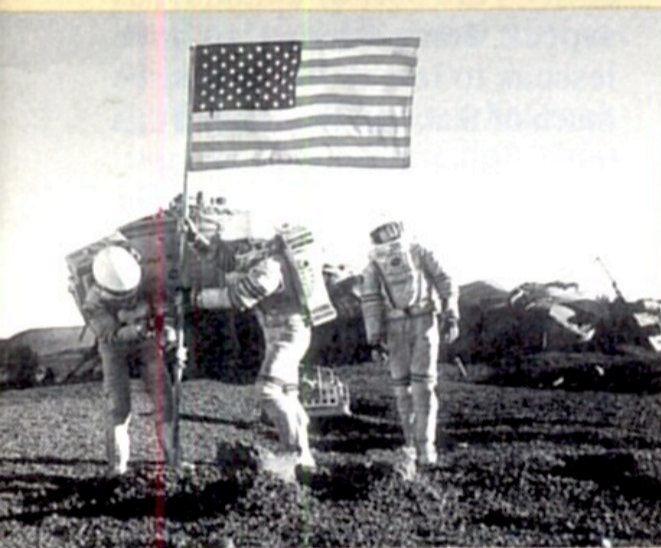
red planet.

Mars is all about, how we would go, and why we should go, everyone got very excited.”

The film was shot in Vancouver to take advantage of the positive currency exchange rate. It was difficult to find the right terrain (especially with everything under snow), but finally a 300-acre sand pit south of the city, the dumping ground for the harbor commission's river dredging, was secured. A 45-acre sand dune with two million square feet of sand was tinted red with 15,000 gallons of paint. Two space-suited doubles and a half-size rover were flown



Disney lands in theatres first, March 3: Kavan Smith (l) and Peter Outerbridge touch down and then disappear without a trace. Left: Rescuers Connie Nelson (l), Gary Sinise, and Jerry O'Connell plant the flag on the red planet in the year 2020.



to locales like Jordan, the Canary Islands, and Australia for second-unit location work.

Viewers may note similarities to 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, because Verreaux worked under the same twin constraints as 2001: technical accuracy and filmability. Instead of two suits, one for the ship and one for the ground, one multi-purpose suit was designed. The large Apollo-style bubble visor had to be modified when Verreaux discovered that it reflected 180 degree vistas, including the cameras and crew. It wasn't financially feasible to digitally erase the images on the faceplates, so smaller visors were designed, similar to those in 2001.

The ship's artificial gravity room was another similarity,

based on real designs. "It's probably not realistic that NASA would design a ship like that, because it's just too expensive, but the physics are real," stated Jacobson. "We did it for two reasons: it was visually interesting, and a lot easier to shoot the scenes if we had gravity and didn't have people on wires for the entire movie—we had plenty of that."

The ship's interior set was designed like a "giant, rotating doughnut," five stories high and 50 feet in diameter, with the ability to rotate 360 degrees. "We had to strap them in, hide the straps, and have them go round and round, like a ferris wheel," continued Jacobson. "[They were] upside down half the time, and they had to pretend that they weren't upside down." Special attention was given to the actors' close-cropped hair and suits during the topsy-turvy sequences. "They were real troopers," exulted Jacobson. "They did months of physical training to achieve the weightless appearance. When their legs appear to be floating, they're actually holding them in position like a ballet dancer."

Though some wire work was necessary, teeter boards were also used, as well as perspective shots (closeups filmed without revealing the actors' feet). There were slight cheats on Mars' surface; after debating the use of helium bags strapped to the cast members to give them lift, the crew decided to use "bounding" only when it was necessary to the script, and have the actors move normally otherwise, despite Mars' lesser gravity (30% of Earth's).

The crew also cheated for dramatic purposes on the areography and meteorology. While NASA needs a flat, featureless plain for a peril-free touchdown, Verreaux squeezed Chryse Planitia, the Valles Marineris canyon, and the infamous "face" into one geographic locale to accommodate the story structure. Skies, which are a soft pinkish tint on Mars, received a dark, moody, "El Greco" digital treatment to heighten the sense of foreboding in the third act.

The film's visual effects were supervised by Academy Award-winner Hoyt Yeatman (THE ABYSS) of Dream Quest Images, with other sequences farmed out to John Knowle and ILM. Yeatman is most proud of

the "amazing-looking images" crafted for the vortex sequence, when a mountain dissolves into a wave of tornado-like energy that wipes out the first mission. Yeatman and staff relied on Hooka "particle rendering" software to create the sequence, in which most of the location shot was replaced with computer-generated imagery for the storm.

A 22-foot long, six-foot diameter "hero model" of the spaceship was constructed by Yeatman's crew for camera "flybys," exterior views of the ship which were then manipulated virtually. CGI was also employed for impressive "cosmic zooms:" long push-ins from space through the window of the spaceship into a closeup of the actors.

Lest science fiction devotees worry that the film's realism doesn't contain the requisite fantastic elements, the ending sequence is pure fantasy.

"Everyone had this desire to have that little rover come over the ridge and find something," mused Jacobson of the Pathfinder mission, "and we address that in the movie. We take the scientific idea of the search for life...and play with it. We have a speculative ending that takes those [ideas] and pushes them a bit." □

What Planet Are You

Garry Shandling on writing and starring-in his

By Douglas Eby

Starring Garry Shandling as an alien sent to earth to help ensure his planet's "domination of the universe," the Columbia Pictures comedy, **WHAT PLANET ARE YOU FROM**, also stars Annette Bening, John Goodman, Greg Kinnear and Ben Kingsley, with appearances by Linda Fiorentino, Camryn Manheim and Nora Dunn. TriStar opens the film nationwide March 3.

Directed by Mike Nichols, the story was developed by Michael Leeson and Shandling, who was also one of the producers. Shandling noted he'd been

“The men have, through evolution, lost their genitals. In order to go to Earth they’ve attached a similar-looking device, but it hums inappropriately.”

—Garry Shandling on *Sci-Fi Ho-Ho's*—

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS, STAR TREK and everything thereafter, including the Jeff Bridges alien movie **STARMAN**. I'd have to say, **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS** is my favorite. I do watch a lot of programs on the Discovery Channel, but I don't read much science fiction, oddly. But I am very interested. I personally feel that a lot of the spacecraft that are spotted are futuristic designs from our own government, but I also think there's something else out there. The theory this movie takes is that they're really not that separated from us, genetically; that the universe is still one entity. And sort of a humorous aspect: don't aliens also have lessons to learn? We never see much of that, and that's what this movie is.”

Harold's home planet, Shandling noted, “is about five thousand years ahead of us. And I just heard on the news in the last few days, that eventually we could get around to procreating without any actual sex, that it would be cloning and other scientific processes.” Residents of his alien planet are “products of cloning,” said Shandling, “so all of the men have, through evolution, lost their genitals because they are no longer needed for procreation. In order to go to Earth, they have attached a similar-looking device, but it hums inappropriately, and they haven't quite figured out how to get that out. There are several scenes in the movie where he's having sex, and the women are asking where that humming sound is coming from, and he continually comes up with excuses like, ‘Oh, you live so close to the freeway; I don't even know how you can have an apartment here, it's so noisy.’”

The “other planet” his character comes from is in a sense a “metaphor for corporate Ameri-



Shandling, who also co-produced the film, stars as clone H1449-6, arrested for failing in his planetary mission to achieve sexual union with an Earth woman.

doing his Larry Sanders character and thought “what would be entirely different would be an alien of some sort. It began with that simple thought, and quickly blossomed into the idea of a man who has to come down to Earth to impregnate a woman, and finds it to be a lot more complicated than what he was taught, and ends up having to confront a lot of humanistic, emotional issues. In some true sense, if the universe is one, which is how I feel philosophically, then planets are at different stages of development, and

perhaps those that are most highly advanced technologically, are also the ones that have the least emotion. It's something I can see happening on this planet.”

Shandling's alien character is, for his visit to Earth, called Harold. “His name on his own planet is a series of numbers,” Shandling said. “The idea is that the premise shouldn't feel at all as though it's science fiction, and to use as little special effects as possible. It's hopefully saying that the other planet is really not that different than us,

other than their technological advancement. And they look very human.”

Harold is a test case, said Shandling. “If he can come down and impregnate a woman, then they will send millions more and take over from the inside. That's the plan.”

Asked about his interest in “true” alien abduction material, such as the writings of John Mack and Whitley Streiber, Shandling noted, “My fascination with all of it began as a product of growing up with the space program, and then movies like

From?

SF comedy.

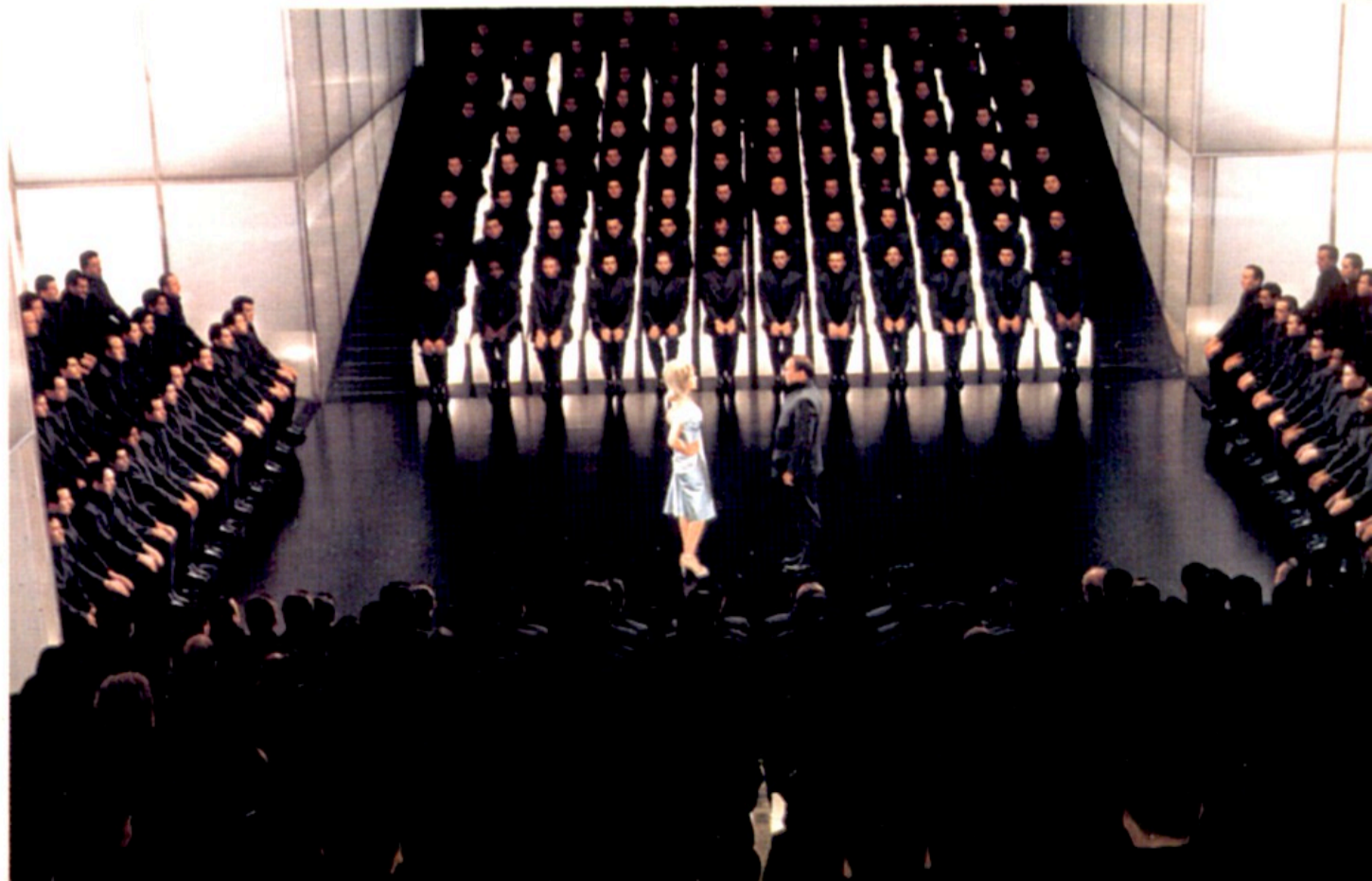
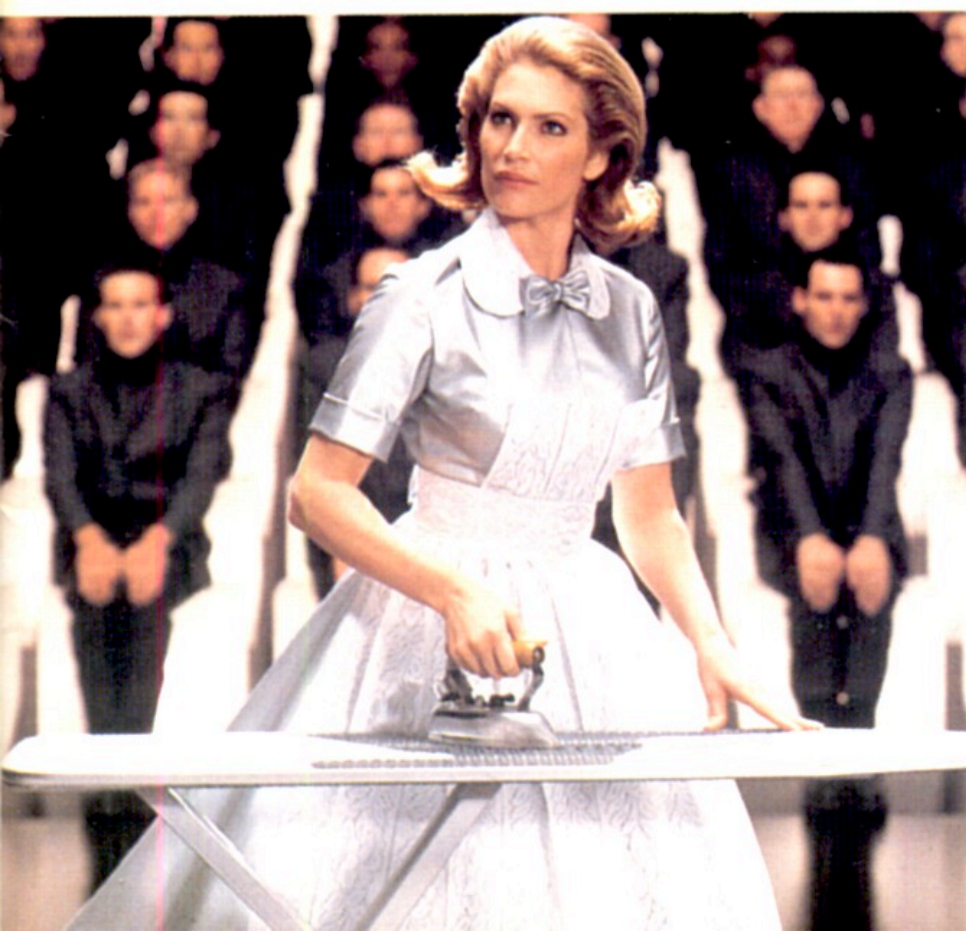
ca,” Shandling said. Another theme, also developed “in a minor way” is that planet Earth is filled with conflict, “and the alien learns that through dealing with the conflict, you can learn something about yourself.

“That’s the positive aspect of conflict. And he gives a speech back on his planet that relates to that. He would rather, in fact, be around that conflict and feel something, than not be around conflict and feel nothing. So there are some philosophical themes. The final, and probably more major one, is purely the difficulty of dealing with the female of the species, and that no technology prepares you for that.”

Commenting on what making the film has meant to him, Shandling said, “It’s kind of like being in college and someone asking what you’re learning as you’re going through it, rather than being able to look back on it. It’ll take me a little time to realize all the things I’ve learned from this project, but I know that I have, and certainly working with Annette Bening, and other actors of that calibre, raises my own level. And we had a lot of fun.” □



Shandling takes the name Harold and falls victim to the same courting and mating anxieties that plague all Earthlings. Left: Tammy Tavares as Planet 10’s Hologram Woman. Right: Presenting Annette Bening to the Planet 10 assembly.



The CROW salvation

By Michael Beeler

The salvation of the new millennium is at hand. It will come with the release of *THE CROW III: SALVATION* through Miramax, the accompanying CD by Coch Records and the continuation of the television series *STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN*, all via Pressman Films, run by Edward R. Pressman and Jeff Most. The only question is whether the public will buy it. Miramax opens the eagerly awaited third installment in the movie series nationwide March 31.

The proclamation of *THE CROW* franchise has been successful in its endeavors thus far, with one blip. The first film was an industry kicker. Both of the previous CDs were unadulterated sidewalk melters. But the second film in the series, *CITY OF ANGELS*, was a financial bomb.

Test audience reviews for *SALVATION* are reportedly through the roof. The artists on the CD are mega-stompers. Even creator James O'Barr, who has had his disagreements with the producers in the past, commented on how much he enjoyed the sneak peek he got of the new film. And that more than anything may be an insight as to the health of The Crow Corporation because the kids do care what the old man thinks.

"We always take great pains to involve James at every level of development," said Most, who, along with Pressman, has produced all three *CROW* films. "This was a promise I made to James when I first optioned the comics back in 1989. James has always been a vocal participant in the process as we have gone through everything from the selection of writers to the development of the scripts in their vari-

The stylish horror comic franchise targets the teen set.



British director Bharat Nalluri rehearses Eric Mabius as the new, younger Crow. The third film in the horror movie series opens nationwide March 31.

ous stages and treatments, as well as the process of choosing a director and the casting process.

"I keep constant contact with James. And I look for his input and insight. He is kind of our guiding light in many, many respects. We've taken great pains, I think, well beyond what is normal in Hollywood in terms of how writers and creators of material have been treated in the past to insure that James is satisfied with

our notions of what is the strong approach to the various creative elements of putting the feature together, as well as the television show.

"And in every respect we want James O'Barr's thumbs up stamp of approval, 'Hey you guys are right on the money! This is inherently exactly what I'd like to see up there!'" said Most. "We want James' involvement. We always have. Without it, I think, *THE CROW* series

would suffer because James has such a heart-felt, emotional, soulful tie to this material. He is an extremely important person to *THE CROW*. Perhaps *the* most important single element in terms of an ongoing presence."

The rumor mill has been running rampant for the last three years concerning the anticipated production of the third installment of *THE CROW* series. Speculations abounded that the next Crow would be a woman; it would be written and directed by Rob Zombie (lead singer of the heavy metal/alternative group White Zombie); it was being filmed in Prague; and that it would involve a storyline where amid an apocalyptic war The Crow would be swayed by both Satan and Jesus Christ.

"It's true we brought in Rob Zombie," said Most. "Rob, along with 50-odd other talented writers and directors, met with us regarding proposed stories for a third *CROW* feature. And we found Rob's vision to be phenomenal."

The premise of Zombie's story involved a dark priest of the Fallen One murdering a young boy and his mother in the year 2010. The boy's spirit is returned to the earth one year later by The Crow, only to forget the horrors of his past life. Twenty-seven years later as a bounty hunter he remembers his past and sets off to exact revenge.

"Ultimately Rob put in a great deal of time and effort into writing a script that we very much want to produce," said Most. "It was an idea he had that was a non-*CROW* story that he had been working on that he adapted to be a *CROW* story. Rob and I scouted all over the Czech Republic and Slovakia for a kind of future-gothic, post-apocalyptic Crow because



Eric Mabius as *The Crow*, inspired by the popular graphic novels written and illustrated by James O'Barr, referred to as "the old man" by the production.

one can take a Crow story anywhere on the time line, anywhere in the Universe.

"After going through the screenwriting process and the scouting process, we ultimately found that his storyline was perhaps better meant for its own handling as a non-CROW feature. It's something that Pressman and I would relish doing in the very near feature with Rob. Quite frankly we envisioned his story as its own franchise. We find him to be an incredible talent. But one has certain adjustments to make when you're following in the footsteps of sequels."

The producers eventually found a storyline that they felt fit in with the modern-day fable James O'Barr originally wrote ten years ago. They did however change one small aspect concerning The Crow himself. "We came to a notion about how we

wanted to approach the third feature," said Most. "I felt very certain that it would be very invigorating to do a younger Crow." Most's storyline was refined by Matt Greenberg (HALLOWEEN H2O) and scripted by Chip Johansson (MILLENNIUM).

Johansson's script takes us to the small town of Salvation where Alex Corvis, played by Eric Mabius (WELCOME TO THE DOLLHOUSE), is framed by a corrupt police force for the murder of his girlfriend Lauren Randall, who is portrayed by Jodi Lyn O'Keefe (HALLOWEEN: H2O). He is imprisoned, executed, and soon returns as The Crow, who, with the help of Lauren's kid sister Erin, played by Kirsten Dunst (INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE) wreaks havoc on the Captain of the police force, played by Fred Ward (TREMORS) and all his enlist-

JEFF MOST, PRODUCER

"We ultimately found that [Rob Zombie's] storyline was better meant for its own handling as a non-CROW feature. It's something that we would relish doing in the very near future."

ed crooked cops.

"My hat is off to Ed Pressman for discovering him," said Most of Johansson. He's written the best CROW script to date, an extremely engrossing and evolving story that I think will keep audiences on the tip of their seats as they get thrills and chills, as well as a strong dose of the heart, which has always been such an essential element in the CROW films."

Directing is Bharat Nalluri, a transplanted Englishman born in India. Nalluri, just 33, has only two features and some TV work under his belt. "I liken him to a young Ridley Scott meets a young Alfred Hitchcock," said Most. "He has an ability to create tension and deliver on action and derive an incredible watchability from his actors, pulling the essence of each and every scene together. Ed Pressman and I were just blown away. I think he is truly going to be one of the superstar directors known the world over. I certainly expect THE CROW III: SALVATION to relay that."

Noted Nalluri of the earlier films in the series, "The first one was completely mold-breaking and kind of set the standard as to how movies were

going to be interpreted in the 1990s. I think it's a kind of iconic movie. It made everyone try to live up to it. The second one, I think, was a great attempt by Tim [Pope the director of THE CITY OF ANGELS, who is also a Brit] and Jean Yves Escoffier the d.p. to actually take the movie on and do something more with it."

Nalluri credited the script for enticing him to come on board to make a sequel of a sequel. "It's a great script," said Nalluri, who likens his career to a travelling circus. "So, you know, it wasn't about trying to make it something it wasn't. It was already a great script. That's where it always starts. I don't care how big the budget is, how small the budget is or who is in it, if the script is good, then I'm interested. So I thought I had a fighting chance to make a good movie in the end."

Bringing something new and fresh to this franchise was Nalluri's biggest challenge. He said he was intent on invigorating THE CROW with images that were different from anything CROW audiences had ever seen before. "I think I've got the most amazing cast," he said. "I've never worked with a bet-

Mabius as *The Crow* deals out two-fisted vengeance when he returns from the grave after his execution—as an innocent man—for the murder of his girlfriend.



The CROW III

Eric Mabius on taking the mantle of fallen Crow Brandon Lee.

By Michael Beeler

Eric Mabius, who plays the new, younger Crow in CROW III: SALVATION, avidly read *Shattered Lives & Broken Dreams*, an anthology of new Crow short stories from Del Rey Books during production, and seemed to have a solid take on the mind set of O'Barr's dark angel. "After my death, when I come back, it's a clean slate because of the force of what happens to me and the process of being brought back to life," said Mabius. "I go from being an infant to being an avenger of all these things. It's like this Crow is the one that returns all of my memories. It drives me mad but at the same time it brings me back to my humanity."

"The pleasure that this character derives from exacting justice is also something that appeals to me. In one scene he opens his arms out, with two fully loaded guns ready, and he lets these guys have their shot and they just open their clips up on me. That was an amazing experience to be squibbed like that and then come right back into it and drop them and they fall like dominoes. It's just one of my favorite scenes from a purely action standpoint."

Mabius has been a fan of O'Barr's comics for years. Born in Pennsylvania, he moved around a lot while growing up back East, including stays in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and six years in Manhattan before attending Sarah Lawrence College in California. He actually auditioned for one of the bad guy's roles in the first CROW film, when he was fresh out of high school. Still he didn't quite appreciate the fan base that supports this franchise until the public relations people on SALVATION presented everyone associated with the film with a bound version of the script, which included liner

notes on the history of the series.

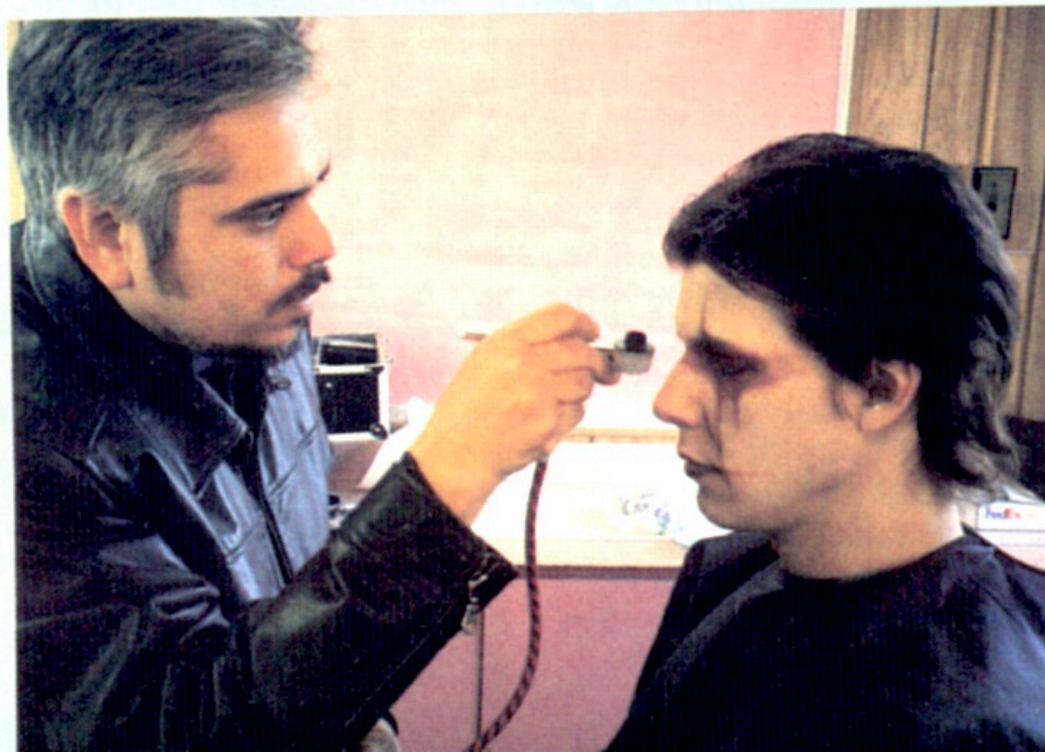
"I had no idea that the first film had grossed over \$150 million [CITY OF ANGELS barely grossed \$30 million] and the soundtracks had done so well [they both went platinum]," admitted Mabius. "That's when I got a little nervous."

"But all that did was make me dive back into the work I was doing with more responsibility. I felt the need to bring something even more true and more believable to the part. My feeling was if I don't buy it, no one else is going to. That's how I think."

Mabius went on to explain that in gearing up for the role of The Crow he concentrated on acting techniques more than real life experiences. He stated, "In preparation of this character, I wasn't going to watch someone be executed. I just wouldn't because that's going to burn something into my brain that I'll never be able to get out. But I can look to actors who impress me, who've had similar roles, actors like Sean Penn, people who are all about the work."

A key relationship that helped Mabius in his quest to create a believable Crow came in the form of a kick boxer from Malaysia who served as his fight choreographer. "I spent every other day for six weeks with this guy," Mabius said of David Lea, who has worked with the likes of Sylvester Stal-

Mabius in the makeup chair as KNB Efx makeup artist Alex Diaz applies the new look he designed for the Crow. Comic fan Mabius relished the role.



Mabius as The Crow checks-out of prison after his execution, to avenge his death on those who railroaded him for a murder he didn't commit.

one, Wesley Snipes and Sandra Bullock and who appears in the film as a bouncer who gets into it with The Crow. "I did all right," said Mabius. "I was really pleased in that it became something that I sort of absorbed through my pores. His impact on me became apparent one day when we got to the set and there was a problem where we couldn't do the stunt."

"They were going to have a stunt guy run up a wall, flip over, and on the way over pull two guns out of these guys' hands and land behind them and shoot them. But the rig wasn't working and it was physically impossible to get that kind of height in order to do that kind of stunt. So, I said, 'Well, Bharat we could save four hours if I just do this. And I just slid back, spun around, came down, hit this guy's wrist, grabbed his gun, then came across and hit the other guy's wrist, took his gun, spun back and shot them both. They ended up filming my suggested movements and it saved a lot of time.'" The suggestion not only saved the production time and money but it helped Mabius gain a little clout with the stunt crew.

"The only reason I was able to suggest that sequence was because this guy had instilled problem-solving in me," continued Mabius. "A confidence and an awareness of manipulating someone else physically. And I have to tell you that it did boost my ego when a lot of the stunt guys thought I was trying to be cool when I said I hadn't had any training before. But the truth is, I just hadn't." □

ter cast in my life. You just put them in front of the camera and they just explode with talent.”

When questioned about the downside of making the film Nalluri simply replied, “The usual moviemaking stuff. You’d rather have 80 days to shoot everything. You’re cramming it all in. But it’s been no more difficult than any other movie.” Nalluri wrapped six weeks of principal photography on Salt Lake City locations in March 1999. Typical to the production of the other two CROW films most of this production was shot late at night. It was not unusual for them to wrap filming at seven or eight in the morning.

As a Brit, Nalluri follows in the storied horror tradition of James Whale, Hitchcock, Clive Barker and many others. “I think it’s because we all went to public school,” joked Nalluri, who makes his American film debut with SALVATION. “It’s just something we kind of naturally go to after having 14 years of school. It’s like being in a Clive Barker seminary. I’m sure it fuels something, considering the history of it. You go back to FRANKENSTEIN, Shelley—it goes back hundreds of years. I don’t know where it comes from actually, that gothic romancing of the macabre. But that really is THE CROW, in its entirety. That expressionistic type of filmmaking.”

Although Nalluri joked about the effects English schooling has on its students, he credited those hallowed halls of horror as being germane to his interest in filmmaking. “Basically it all comes down to the fact I went to school with a very good friend of mine back in England, since the age of nine, a guy named Paul Anderson,” said Nalluri, whose father is a professor and whose mother is an accountant. “He and I grew up in the same class. We made our first super eight films together.

“We discovered a super eight camera in the art cupboard at school. I directed him. He directed me. He went on to direct MORTAL KOMBAT [his directing debut] and EVENT HORIZON and SOLDIER. He came down to the set one week. I’m about three years behind him [he laughed]. I’m hot on his heels!”

BHARAT NALLURI, DIRECTOR

“[Horror’s] just something we naturally go to after having 14 years of school. It’s like being in the Clive Barker seminary. I’m sure it fuels something, considering the history of it.”



Ed Pressman Films producer Jeff Most (l), Kirsten Dunst, who plays Erin Randall, the kid-sister of the Crow’s slain girlfriend, and director Bharat Nalluri.

“Chip had an amazing script,” said Mabus, who up until THE CROW III had never done a genre film. “And I think it’s very much true to James’ [O’Barr] original vision and what was done in the first film. The relationships between the people in his film ring much more true to me. They ring true and that’s what appealed to me.

“I think that it’s going to become apparent when people see the strength of the relationship between my character and Lauren’s, the woman I’m in love with. James O’Barr experienced an archetypical love being torn away in such a violent way. And I always go right back to that. From that fountain everything comes, every action. It isn’t about one dimensional sadistic violence. It’s born out of the rage and the frustration.”

When Mabus spoke of his character he made you believe he was really talking about himself. “There is one scene that I have with one of the cops where I say, ‘What price for a life?’” said Mabus, who was on a na-

tionally ranked luge team during his high school years. “For two lives: how can you measure what was taken away? It’s immeasurable. And that’s sort of the soul of where I’m coming from with this character, to play all those moments, his frustration, his confusion.

“I think what really appealed to me, with that in mind, was when I’m framed for the murder of Lauren and then I’m electrocuted, not only is my girlfriend murdered but then there is this wicked twist in that I’m blamed for it, forced to live in prison and then executed. It’s like adding insult to injury and then adding torture.”

Mabus noted that his role as a replacement Crow might seem lame to those who view sequels with contempt. “I’m sure there are those that would roll their eyes at the fact that I’m doing the third film of any series,” admitted Mabus, whose only real mainstream movie before doing SALVATION was the mean-teen hit CRUEL INTENTIONS. “But this has been a unique experience for me. All along the way

the projects I have entered into have ended up being much more than I could have hoped. The first film I ever got was WELCOME TO THE DOLLHOUSE and I didn’t even have an agent. I was doing off-Broadway plays. And 24 hours later I got a Miramax film: THE JOURNEY OF THE AUGUST KING.”

Although he didn’t want to give the impression that he only saw his role in THE CROW III as a stepping stone, Mabus was well aware that it might prove to be an asset to his still young career. “It certainly appeals to me in that respect,” admitted Mabus, about the fact that THE CROW could take him places he has never gone to before. “If this allows me to do more of the projects that I want to do then it’s even more of a blessing than it has been already and I hope that’s going to happen. I think, there’s a certain amount of celebrity that will come along with this.

“But it’s the reason I did this film in the first place, that’s going to keep me choosing the films that I’m going to choose. I’m always looking for projects that resound. I chose this part for sustaining reasons because it moved me.”

During the production of the film Mabus looked to his director for insight and support as each scene, violent or not, was mapped out, then shot. “That’s what appealed to me about Bharat’s take on the script,” said Mabus. “There’s an operatic quality to the script, that he talked about, where less is more. Especially having a palatable understanding of how audiences are much more savvy than they were, maybe, when the first one came out around [1994]. And things don’t need to be said. They can be told with a gesture, a look. And that has everything to do with how Bharat sets the shots up and how he edits them.

In conclusion Mabus did not rule out the idea that someday we may see him in an action flick again. But he did caution that the rules of the action flick have changed. He stated, “The thing that I discussed with Bharat: audiences require more nowadays. And that, unfortu-



Eric Mabius as *The Crow*, gets answers from Detective Dutton (Bill Mondy), filming on location in Salt Lake City, Utah, standing in for Everytown, USA.

ERIC MABIUS, ACTOR

“James O’Barr experienced an archetypal love being torn away in such a violent way. It isn’t about one-dimensional sadistic violence. It’s born out of the rage and frustration.”

nately, is why some kids now days don’t want their parents’ action idols. They want a whole new understanding of what an action star is. It’s someone who can both act and do the action. You can’t have one without the other. That’s why, I think audiences end up feeling cheated by certain films.”

A big part of what drives THE CROW franchise is the collective producers’ belief that they have a real gem of an idea on their hands and they want to see where they can take it. “I think inherently THE CROW has a very special strong message to tell,” said Most. “There is something in this world that we all want to imagine exists and that’s called poetic justice. It’s described in various cultures as balances: yin and yang. There are all sorts of notions that stem from religion in various cultures that if there are wrongs—in some manner they will be right.

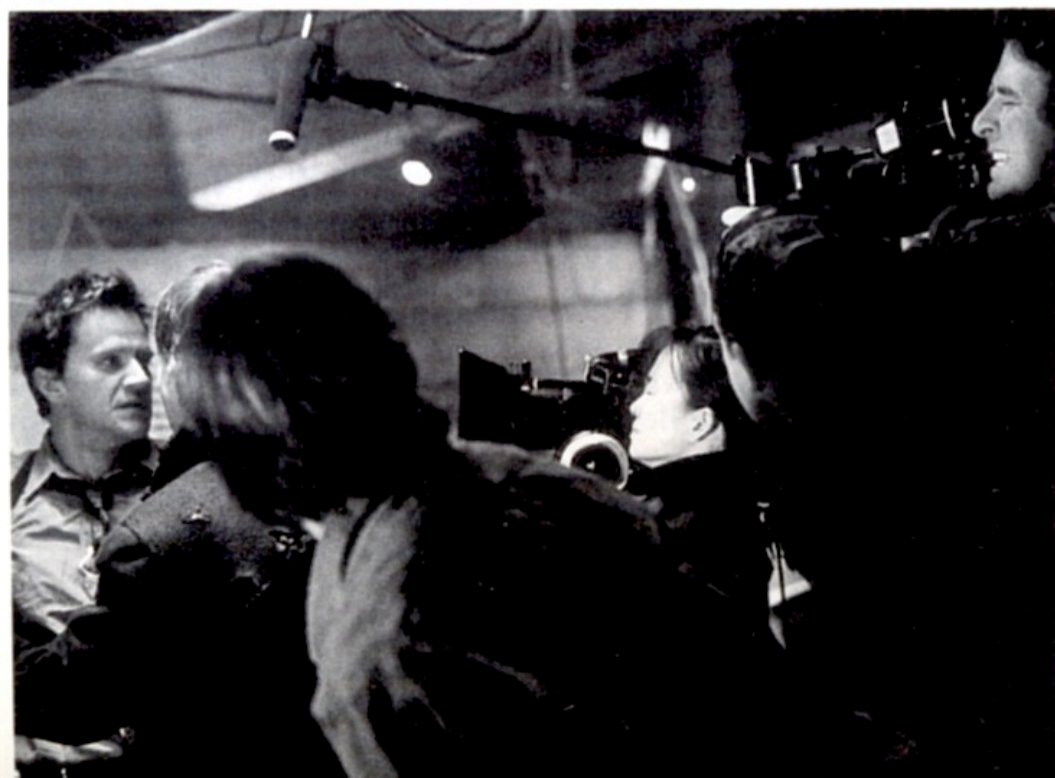
“I think it’s an essence of all our lives. We are all subject to hardships. We are all subjected to situations in which we know of people who have been hurt or we ourselves have been hurt. In THE CROW we replenish the notion that inherently the Universe looks after us, that there is a balance. There is a good that measures out in equal proportions and equal strength to any bad that may befall us that occurs upon our spirit, our work, our life, our friends, our families.

“I think that as long as THE CROW is invigorating enough

to unfold on the screen, whether it be the small screen on television or the big screen as a feature, I think we should keep telling those stories,” said Most. “I think a large part rests on the shoulders of the audiences of our fans. I mean we are very sensitive to our fans’ thoughts about The Crow, the emotional impact of The Crow.

“As long as we affect an involvement, an emotional involvement, in our fans and as long as they are there to support dynamic storytelling and appreciate our efforts, I think we will try in every respect to come back with better and better stories as we have in this case with SALVATION. I truly believe that it’s a matter of fulfilling those wishes and desires of our fans in tackling new territory with The Crow. You know we are already at work—even though this film has not come out—developing story-

Mabius confronts detective Tim DeKay as cinematographer Carolyn Chen (center) and Ian Fox shoot with two cameras, standard for dramatic scenes.



lines for the fourth installment of THE CROW. In part because we have been so invigorated by all that has gone on with THE CROW III: SALVATION.”

This franchise has always had its eye on the distant horizon, with a strong commitment to change and the process of taking chances.

“In the sense that one wishes to continue on with something and make it special I think one has to take every ounce of effort and place it in the right areas of effort including reinvigorating or reinventing the storytelling,” said Most. “And to that end we certainly did not want THE CROW III: SALVATION to play out in the same schematic, if you will, of THE CROW and THE CROW II: CITY OF ANGELS.

“So, for us, making this new and different, to make it in fact integrally more involving, from both an intellectual and emotional standpoint, as it was a visceral standpoint, was for us a realm of concern that this be something completely new. At the same time it had to be something that audiences are familiar with in terms of the character of what a Crow is. But we wanted to put the Crow into a completely new environment and tell the story in a manner we certainly

have never seen before.”

The power of this boy’s club can be seen in the talent they attract for their CDs. The SALVATION soundtrack will sport the likes of Monster Magnet, Danzig, Hole, Kid Rock, The Flys, Static X, Stabbing Westward and a number of bug zapping international industrial bands. It will no doubt have a hand in helping some members of the angst generation glimpse the hand of God. It’s sure to rock.

Their industry clout can also be viewed in the fact that in a era of studio micro-management they are allowed, even encouraged, to be the mavericks and test the fringe. “You know we have a very fortunate situation, which is unusual in Hollywood filmmaking,” said Most. “And that is: we do not have to follow marketing dictates, studio dictates per se, in that one can populate a film with people known for this or that, whether it be successful films or successful television or has built a career around doing various sorts of roles that can be akin to any particular role we have in the movie.

“Our purest goal here was to find the finest for each and every role that we could bring into the film. And again this is not always the process. It is often a marketing decision. But in as much as we have a successful franchise, a familiar name title in THE CROW, I think we’re able to take some liberties and introduce aspects into the process, which might normally not be there.”

Incidentally don’t discount the idea that we may one day see a woman don the mantle of The Crow. Most said that he and Pressman have been exploring the idea for years and it will probably happen one of these days. □

The CROW

Carrying on the franchise in the tragic shadow of Brandon Lee.

By Michael Beeler

Eric Mabijs, who serves as *The Crow* in the third installment of the series, sat quietly on a couch watching a journalist's frustration with a tape recorder. After a few minutes of drama Mabijs quipped, "It's THE CROW curse!" The entire room immediately broke into laughter. It was a great little joke that served quite effectively as a tension reliever. But it does belie a very real issue. And that is simply: from its inception this franchise has had its share of problems.

The story of *The Crow* was conceived and written by cartoonist James O'Barr, when his fiancée was killed by a drunk driver. The emotionally distraught creator spent years agonizing over the loss as he drew the original comic book.

He was quoted in *Reliving The Pain* in 1994 as saying, "I thought it would be cathartic, but as I drew each page, it made me more self-destructive, if anything. There is pure anger on each page, little murders. I was more messed up by the time I was done with the book."

Brandon Lee, who played *The Crow* in the original feature film production, brought the curse to the public's attention when he was killed on set. His death was the result of an undetected dummy bullet being left in the barrel of a gun subsequently loaded with blanks that was used for a flashback sequence where Lee's character was murdered in the film.

The dummy bullet hit him in the abdomen and mortally wounded him. The accident was linked to the fact that the on-set weapons master was sent home early in order to cut production cuts. Consequently the film was destroyed out of respect to Lee.

What could not be destroyed was the impact those two incidents have had on this successful production. Unlike the replacement of James Bond or Batman, the replacement of Lee's *Crow* has never been fully accepted by



Comic creator James O'Barr, who wanted to end the series after Lee's shooting death.

fans of this series or, it would seem, the cast and crew.

"I think the difference is that Sean Connery didn't die," said Mabijs, about the difference between Agent 007 being replaced and *The Crow* being replaced. "Something was torn away from audiences. In a sense, the very thing that brought about the creation of the character is what the audiences had a taste of.

"Not that Brandon was a close personal friend of theirs. But also it goes back

to James' fiancée having her life end so tragically. James had created a character, a face to the kind of angst and the turmoil that everyone goes through. Especially so for people experiencing love for the first, at the most important time in their lives, when they're in their teens and twenties."

Although journalists were forbidden to ask questions concerning the direct impact of Lee's fatal shooting, the shadow of his presence continually rose during every interview. Mabijs especially referred to Lee during the most routine inquiries.

"I would have liked to have a conversation with Brandon about what he was thinking about during his scenes," admitted Mabijs. "I'd be willing to wager he was playing the truth of the scenes, the situation of Eric Draven, as opposed to trying to extract bits from other people's performances and other texts.

"The energy is what drives me. It's hard for me to find enough adjectives that describe the kind of energy, the labor of love, the passion that's behind this. It's a big task. Especially since the second one [which starred Vincent Perez as the second *Crow*] didn't do that well. And a lot of people were upset by them trying to replace Brandon Lee. And I can respect those people for the kind of love they had for Brandon."

Even during a postproduction interview, producer Jeff Most eluded to the fact that this film had been free of any mishaps. He



Martial arts heir Brandon Lee as *THE CROW*, killed during the making of the 1994 original when a gunshot stunt went awry, a hard act to follow.

stated, "We're delighted to say that this is our first *CROW* production that we delivered on time, on schedule, on budget and without a single accident to any of the crew or cast or anyone involved. And we attribute that to a great deal of preparation and forethought, a desire to be proactive in making certain that we took every opportunity to ensure the swift moving of the production.

"Everyone just pulled together and it was really smooth sailing. We had to obviously invest ourselves tremendously energy-wise to make a film that for all intents and purposes looks at least two times its budget. We are very proud that we did that successfully at the same time that we maintained a strict watch on our budget and time schedule and precautions for safety for all the various aspects of shooting special effects and stunts. It all can be done if the team puts their collective mind to it."

Mabijs, when questioned about a particular scene where he was riddled with bullets, could not help but be relieved that the stunt did not cost him anything more than a cheap thrill. "I'm excited that one of those squibs didn't blow up into my chest," revealed Mabijs. "It's like, can I really do this? Because in that split second there is a taste of what it's like to have something explode in your chest. The nice part is to have it not hurt." □

The Road To El Dorado

Dreamworks animation takes inspiration from Bob Hope and Bing Crosby road pics.

By Mike Lyons

The old Bob Hope-Bing Crosby "Road" movies are not exactly where many animation studios would find inspiration. However, this is one creative well that DreamWorks has decided to dip into. As they did with *THE PRINCE OF EGYPT*, the studio once again looks to differentiate itself, with its second traditionally animated feature, *THE ROAD TO EL DORADO*.

"Part of the reason that the 'Road' movies were used as inspiration is that we're trying to break the mold of animation storytelling," said Don Paul, who co-directs *EL DORADO* with Eric "Bibo" Bergeron. "We're taking what are usually the comedic, supporting characters and putting them up front as the main characters. So, suddenly you don't have your normal, leading-man scenario."

"The main characters in this movie are anti-heroes," added co-director Bergeron. "They're flawed and more human. For the first time in an animated movie, we're following the journey of two common guys."

After the heavy drama that dominated the studio's highly anticipated debut, *THE PRINCE OF EGYPT*, translating the quick, bantering comedy of Hope and Crosby to animation is also the change of pace that DreamWorks was hoping for.

"One of the unusual things about this film is that we have a really fast-pace to the 'cutting,'" noted Paul. "There's overlapping dialogue in the film and a lot of bantering back and forth. That, right there, is a whole different thing for animation. Because of that, the rhythm of this film is somewhat different."

THE ROAD TO EL DORADO, at its center, is a buddy movie. Set in the year 1519, the film focuses on two inept con



Serguei Kouchnerov animates Miguel, voiced by Kenneth Branagh, in a re-working of the old Bob Hope and Big Crosby "Road Movie" formula of the '40s.

men, Miguel and Tulio. "They play off of each other really well," said Paul. "Miguel is the dreamer and Tulio is the realist. Tulio is the one who comes up with the ideas and the plans and Miguel is the one who inspires him."

The two stowaway to the New World, aboard a ship that belongs to the explorer Cortez. When they're discovered, they're pitched overboard (along with a trusty horse). They make it to land, where they discover El Dorado, a mystical, BRIGADOON-like city of gold. Once in the city, the two cons are mistaken for gods by the locals and see this as an opportunity to make off with the city's rich cache. Soon, however, Miguel and Tulio are entwined with the city's inhabitants and must stay to thwart an overthrow by the film's two disparate villains. One is Cortez, who comes at the film's climax to claim the city as his own. They also face Tzekel Khan, El Dorado's high-priest, who possesses mystical powers and wants to overthrow the Chief. "He's really our main villain in the film," noted Paul, "with Cortez as the secondary villain. What's fun about Tzekel Khan is

that there's humor to him, in that he's so villainous, he's pushed over the edge sometimes. He takes such joy in being evil."

Bringing the lush, South American look of *THE ROAD TO EL DORADO* to life fell upon the film's art director, Ramon Zibach, who did extensive research into Mayan art work, to help capture the film's South American flavor. "In their time, the Mayans had already been stylizing and using cartoon designs," he said.

This research also influenced the subtle and not-so-subtle ways, in which color was utilized in the film. "I'm always pushing the color. I'm not as

timid as most art directors," said Zibach, adding, "The South American use of color was very defined, everything has connotations. They used a lot of magentas, terracottas and teal blues. Which are three great colors and we use a lot of that in the film."

Much of this inspiration came from an early, pre-production trip to South America. Although, with *EL DORADO*, the filmmakers were afforded more freedom, which wasn't available on the more realistic *PRINCE OF EGYPT*.

"We were able to have a lot more fun with this one," noted Zibach. "There are more exaggerated poses, more gags and more comedy. It's not *REN AND STIMPY*, but there's great interaction between the characters."

This is especially true of the two leads, Miguel and Tulio. James Baxter, supervising animator for Tulio, found a unique hybrid, when he was fashioning the lanky con artist. "I drew a line somewhere between Nicolas Cage and John Cleese," said Baxter. "I wanted him to be someone who is a little too tall for their own good."

Baxter, who was one of the Disney stu-



Miguel (l) and Tulio, voiced by Kevin Kline, match up clues to landmarks as they follow their map on *THE ROAD TO EL DORADO*, opening nationwide March 31.

dio's top animators before coming to DreamWorks (*THE LION KING*'s Rafiki and *HUNCHBACK*'s Quasimodo are just two of his creations), also took a lot of inspiration from Kevin Kline, the actor behind Tulio's voice. "He's so diverse," said Baxter, "and there are so many different sides to him. There was never a danger of Tulio becoming Kevin, because he's so many other things. Tulio is Kevin doing his 'manic, crazy guy,' much along the lines of Otto in *A FISH CALLED WANDA*."

For Tulio's "other half," Miguel, the filmmakers behind *EL DORADO* called upon one of the world's most distinguished Shakespearean actors, Kenneth Branagh. For Surguei Kouchnorov, supervising animator for Miguel, this meant not allowing this acting powerhouse to overshadow the character. "I learned to separate him from his voice," he noted. "As an animator, you have to go with the performance and not just how the actor looks."

This must have been a difficult task, given the fact that Kline and Branagh actually interacted while recording some of their dialogue. "They recorded a sword fight scene together," said Bergeron. "They were actually doing their lines with swords in their hands. They were dueling and shouting and yelling. We kept most of it in."

In addition to Kline and Branagh, *THE ROAD TO EL DORADO* also features the voice of Rosie Perez as Chel, the native girl. Essentially, the Dorothy Lamour-ish female

character, Chel, proves to be smarter than both of the con artists and a worthy ally. "She's definitely one of the more sassier characters that we've seen in an animated film," noted Paul. "She's sexy and attractive and yet she's very strong-willed."

For its villainy, *EL DORADO* cast veteran voice actor Jim Cummings as Cortez and Armand Assante as Tzekel Khan. "He's a real method actor and is very strong with his voice," said Paul of Assante. "We didn't know how he was going to do with the comedic timing of the lines. I didn't know if he could go that route, but he was wonderful. He could turn a line and just make it a little funnier."

Two other names attached to the film are Elton John and Tim Rice, who have written new songs for *EL DORADO*, their first film collaboration since their Oscar-winning turn for Disney's *THE LION KING*. Unlike that Serengeti blockbuster, *EL DORADO* is (like many of today's animated films) shy-

Dreamworks breaks the animation mold: Miguel and Tulio stage a swordfight, scamming their way out of trouble in a comedy/adventure set in 1519.



“The main characters in this film are anti-heroes. They’re flawed and more human. We’re following the journey of two common guys .”

—Co-director Eric Bergeron—

ing away from the typical Broadway paradigm. "At the very beginning of production, Tim Rice was involved in the scriptwriting process," noted Bergeron. "We didn't just insert his songs in the movie, we tried to make them part of the story. We didn't want to stop the movie just to start a song."

EL DORADO also takes a new approach to the character animation, as the film's ratta-tat comic timing forced the artists to stay on their toes. "From beginning to end, I had to act everything out in my head," said Kouchnorov, adding, with a laugh, "Then it would travel down my shoulders, wrists, hands and out through the pencil."

James Baxter added that animation is all about, "using both sides of your brain at the same time. You have to be creative, in terms of being able to draw and act, but it's a technical exercise at the same time."

For Baxter, even though Disney is the big fish in the animation pond and DreamWorks is just dipping their feet into the water, leaving the former for the latter was an opportunity he couldn't pass up. "It was really about getting the chance to work with new people. There are a lot of very talented people here. It's also been great to be a part of building a studio from the ground up."

Unlike *PRINCE OF EGYPT*, which carried the weight of "DreamWorks' animation debut," *THE ROAD TO EL DORADO*, as second out of the gate, isn't burdened with such a load. Paul, who was co-head of visual effects for *PRINCE OF EGYPT* and makes his directorial debut with *EL DORADO*, noted, "Initially, a lot of us thought, 'How do we do a follow up [to *THE PRINCE OF EGYPT*]?' But, the more we became involved with *EL DORADO*, the more we saw that it was a huge departure. It's a completely different film and from that standpoint, I feel it stands alone. The tradition that we're aiming for here, is to make every film as unique as possible. I think that people want to attach a certain type of film to every studio and I think, because of that, we're trying to break some rules." □

FREQUEN

Dennis Quaid gets a life-saving message from

By Paul Wardle

FREQUENCY, a new science fiction thriller starring Dennis Quaid, takes its inspiration from scientific genius Stephen Hawking, who noted about black holes in space: "There is still so much we don't know, such as what happens to objects and information that fall into a black hole. Do they reemerge elsewhere in the Universe, or in another Universe? And can we warp space and time so much that one can travel back in time?"

Instead of another film about people travelling in time, FREQUENCY is more in tune with the classic TWILIGHT ZONE episode that has a little girl talking to her deceased grandmother on a toy telephone. The difference is that in FREQUENCY, a full-grown man, played by James Caviezel, attempts to prevent the death of his own father which has already occurred long ago. Via shortwave radio, the father, Dennis Quaid, who we see as a 40-year-old fireman, is able to talk to his son, who is now a 30-year old police detective. New Line Cinema opens their unusual science fiction film nationwide April 7.

The film's setting flashes back and forth from 1969 to 1999. On the set, this translated into four separate monitors: two for 1969 and two for 1999, being watched by the director and crew at all times. The confusion of this four-camera technique, heretofore used mainly in television, is in keeping the continuity straight throughout shooting. Frank Sullivan and his son John establish a relationship as adults. John, who lost his father when he was six, happily steals a few more moments with his dad on the shortwave, and Frank gets a chance to see into his son's future. As scenes are



Jim Caviezel stars with Quaid in the time-travel drama as the son in 1999, who discovers that he can talk to his dead father in 1969 on his dad's old ham radio.

shot out of sequence, the relationship between the father and son must be consistent as it goes through different stages. John is trying to prevent his father's death by warning him away from what will cause it, but circumstances conspire to rob the cop of his father, and other family members, in more ways than one. A killer is loose, one with connections to the family's past, and it's a race against time to keep the cycle from repeating.

Much of the shooting took place in Toronto, where Toby Emmerich, screenwriter and one of two executive producers on the film, explained the genesis of the idea, and his own involvement.

"The idea started, originally, with this notion I had about two kids who find their grandfather's old ham radio. What if they were able, through a device that's been everything from

a mini-black hole to a worm hole to an unexplained stellar phenomenon, to make a connection with that radio's original owner, their grandfather? I was also interested in writing stories about the relationships between cops and firemen. They're different. Policemen deal with the human mind, and crime, which is the dark side of the human spirit. Firemen deal with danger, primarily, even in the case of arson. Their job is not finding out who the arsonist is, the heart of a firefighter is just to save other humans. So the notion of a policemen having to get a fireman to help him track down and stop an evil force, [interested me]. Those ideas melded, and a friend of mine suggested [that we add a serial killer to the story]."

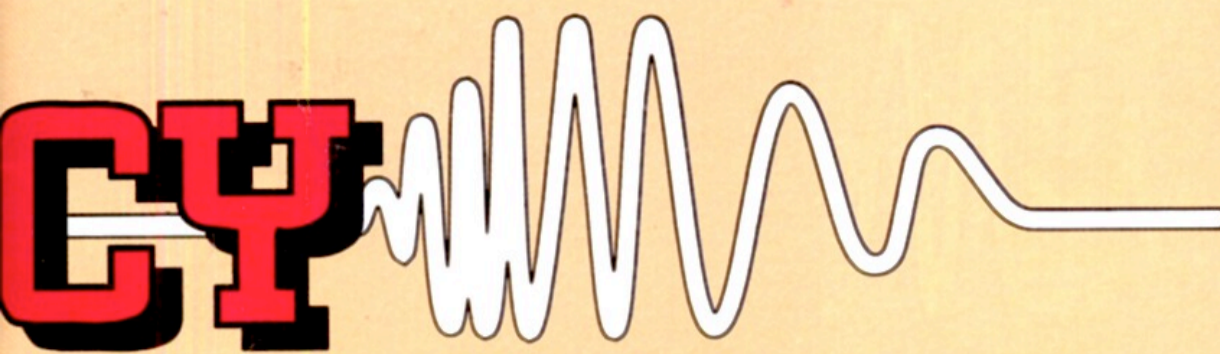
Emmerich was intrigued by the concept of "a time travel movie without time travel [of

the body]. What travels is information, and how that information in the future is absorbed and acted upon, in the past, and that changes the future. [It asks the question:] what if you could change your past?"

"To me the heart of this movie," continued Emmerich, "is this father/son story. It's about this guy who needs to make a connection with a father that he never really got to know. All the [other elements], the science fiction, the cops and robbers, [are secondary to the real story]. I think all great science fiction has humanity in it, but in this movie, the humanity, at its core is this story of the father and son."

Toby Emmerich is a record company executive and ran New Line's music department, concerned mainly with movie soundtracks and other commercial recordings. During his seven and a half years in that field, he came to learn a lot about the film business. Having a foot in the door at New Line helped him get his script looked at, but it took a lot of rewrites, and several years to reach this stage. This is his first script, and it looks like a winner.

The many sequences with John and Frank talking on the radios, could easily have been handled differently. Instead of shooting all of Dennis Quaid's scenes in front of the radio and then Caviezel's separately, as one would expect, the aforementioned four-camera technique enables both actors to play to each other without ever being in the same room. Four separate monitors are watched during the emotionally charged scenes, and playing to each other helps keep the intensity believable. Though the finished shots will cut back and forth between each actor, the conversation is coming over the radio



his son from the future.

spontaneously in each take, making it unnecessary to match the shots after the fact.

But is there anything in Toby Emmerich's own relationship with his father, that would prompt him to want to explore this relationship on film? "I guess a little bit," he replied. "I saw Bruce Springsteen on Charlie Rose's show on PBS, and he was asked about the hundreds of songs he's written about his dad. Yet only one song is about Springsteen's mom. He said that his relationship with his mom was really good and solid and he understood it. His relationship with his dad was a lot more complicated. He was kind of working out some stuff in these songs, and for me, my relationship with my father had a lot of love but also a lot of conflict. Maybe some of my feelings about it were in the story somewhere."

According to Emmerich, these are ordinary characters in extraordinary situations. "The motto of Frank Sullivan's fire house is 'In the eye of the storm,' meaning when everyone's running away from danger, he's running, towards it. He's got extraordinary aspects

to him, but ultimately, is ordinary in the best sense."

Emmerich noted he's been blessed with Greg Hoblit, a director who shares his vision, known mainly for his work on TV shows like HILL STREET BLUES, L.A. LAW, and NYPD BLUE and the films PRIMAL FEAR and FALLEN. With such a record, Hoblit is no stranger to multicamera set-ups or crime dramas, and he is good with actors.

Oddly enough, the cop character was not what attracted Hoblit to this project. "I've done so many cop shows," he said, "plus a homicide detective in the movie FALLEN, that I would've been perfectly happy not to ever do another cop movie. It was the story. The interesting mix of a good cop story, a good fireman story, a good love story, in a way, between the father and son, plus the sci-fi, time travel, some very good action stuff. [The main attraction for me] was the kind of thing we all fantasize about: a chance to make contact with someone we've lost. To say that thing to your parent that you never got to say, or to a friend or someone in your life that you



Quaid plays Frank Sullivan, a firefighter who must act to stop a serial killer when he receives an ominous radio warning from the future from his own son.

lost at a wrong and seemingly unfair moment, and you never got to finish it. Had it just been that, I wouldn't have been interested. This is not MY DINNER WITH ANDRE, where they talk for two hours. This has so many other elements surrounding it that raise its entertainment value and raise its emotional state."

In addition to the lengthy conversations, the film opens with a sequence featuring Quaid fighting fires heroically. "And then we have a scene with John [Jim Caviezel] being the homicide detective, at the scene of a skeleton being unearthed, that begins the process of the murder mystery that trails through the movie," Hoblit explained.

The decision to film the father/son conversations as if the two sets were part of a stage play, was Hoblit's. "It was part defensive and part practical and part experimental," he said. "These conversations are very important. They were going to have a certain rhythm and intensity to them and they needed to be able to overlap each other. The actors also needed to feed off each other, yet they are not in the same house, they are not on the same set, so there's no chance to do over-the-shoulder [shots] or have the two actors looking each other in the eye and feeding off each other. It was a really interesting problem to solve. How to keep them both at the same level, emotionally, and if you are shooting a

scene separately, where Jim Caviezel was onstage and we were shooting him and Dennis Quaid was offstage saying the words, you wouldn't have the same juice. Both guys are in costume. They both know the cameras are turned on. They are fully prepared to act."

It also saves time, because instead of shooting all the Dennis Quaid scenes for days, then going back to shoot Caviezel's speeches from the same pages of script, it can be done all at once and reduce the number of shooting days considerably.

For Hoblit, the relationship between the resurrected father and his deprived son was especially poignant. "My father died three years ago," he revealed, "and it was a very difficult death; long and protracted, and we had a life together which was not altogether candid or fully expressed. When this movie was presented to me, I couldn't help but think about that a lot. Dennis Quaid has a young son who's seven years old now. He thinks about that in the context of what if suddenly he was gone, and his son, who is almost the same age now as 'John' was in the movie when 'Frank' died, had to go on alone. Almost everyone attached to it, [even early on] because we were going to make this movie a year ago, before it stumbled had issues with their fathers."

As research for the project, Hoblit spent time with Profes-

Director Gregory Hoblit (FALLEN) rehearses Quaid in 1969, trying to stop his own murder. New Line opens the unusual science fiction film nationwide April 7.



FATHER & SON

Dennis Quaid and Jim Caviezel on their time-bending reunion.

By Paul Wardle

The crux of the storyline to *FREQUENCY* is a recaptured father/son relationship between Frank Sullivan, and his son John. Frank is a fireman who has saved many lives in the line of duty. Yet his own life and that of his wife was snuffed out in 1969, under circumstances that were never resolved. Their son was six at the time of the murder of his parents, and was forced to grow up without them. Yet the orphaned boy was raised to be a fine man with a talent for criminology. In 1999, he is a 36-year-old police detective who magically regains contact with his father over his ham radio. Their voices travel between time zones, interconnected by cosmic forces that bend time and allow two men to speak 30 years apart.

On the set, Jim Caviezel, who portrays John Sullivan in his first major film role, is shy and quiet, younger than the character he plays in *FREQUENCY*. For the far less experienced Caviezel, playing opposite Dennis Quaid, as father Frank, even over a microphone, is quite intimidating. The veteran star is patient and accommodating to the newcomer, who can sometimes be seen frustrated when he doesn't perform to his own expectations, or flubs lines during a long speech.

"It's more intimidating in person, with him," Caviezel admitted, "especially someone like him because I've watched him for years." Caviezel had worked briefly with Quaid in both *WYATT EARP* and Oliver Stone's *ANY GIVEN SUNDAY*. "I haven't talked to the guy for a long time."

Caviezel used his feelings of anxiety in his acting, because the awkwardness of an adult son chatting with his dead father comes across from his real life awe at working with Quaid.

For Caviezel the story centers around "the communication and love between the father and son, the difficulty for parents to communicate with their children in a lot of ways. I think what gets in the way of being close to your parents, is that

we're on different frequencies, hence the title of the movie."

Caviezel's radio conversations with Quaid are involved set pieces with few cuts. Everything has to be perfectly staged like a play, in order for these scenes to work. Caviezel compared the challenge of accomplishing this to a blind man whose other senses have become more acute to compensate. "Working off a radio, and listening to Dennis' voice, at first was very difficult. I can't see his gestures. So I just think, what if I couldn't see? What if I only had the voice to go on?"

Quaid was surprised to learn that Caviezel was intimidated to work with him. "I didn't feel that from him," Quaid said of his co-star. "I don't know if he was saying that to be nice, but he's quite an extraordinary actor, and I think he's got a great future."

The star of such films as *BREAKING AWAY*, *THE LONG RIDERS*, *THE RIGHT STUFF*, *THE BIG EASY*, *SUSPECT*, *GREAT BALLS OF FIRE*, *POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE* and *WYATT EARP*, Quaid has always had a shy, yet stoic presence on the screen. This role of a fireman who gets a second chance at life in his 40th year displays a side of his personality that many may find surprising. The four-camera technique, though different than what Quaid is used to in films, was not at all a problem for the veteran actor.

"I thought it was fantastic the way the director set it up," he said. "This way was great because we have two sets. The same house in

Quaid hugs son (Daniel Henson) after receiving a radio message from the boy, all grown-up, from the future, a unique sci-fi drama scripted by Toby Emmerich.



Caviezel plays John Sullivan, a policeman who discovers clues to his father's death and tries to save his life on a radio that reaches him in the past.

1969, and 1999, and we were shooting the scene in real time, like doing a scene with someone. Usually with something like this, I'd be talking into a microphone, pretending to be in a phone conversation."

Quaid's decision to undertake the role was based on the excellence of Toby Emmerich's script. "When I read a script for the first time, I try to be an audience member, to have that first time experience. This was a really great story. It took me on a ride, and it had science fiction and a great thriller aspect, and a great father/son story too."

Asked if he has drawn on any personal experience in his performance, he remarked, "You relate the story to your experience. That's what acting's all about. You take something from your life and put it on the screen."

"I still approach a role the same way I did in college. If anything, I think I'm a lot more economical than I used to be. I do a lot more with less. I used to go for the circus factor," he laughed. "I was just really intense, but there's other ways to do things. I put my whole heart and soul into everything I do. It's the only way I can do it. I love what I do, and I'm really lucky to be making a living at it."

Though some people do compromise their standards, Quaid insisted he never does. "Why should I? [He chuckled.] I feel sorry for people who do that. I think it's a tragedy when people don't care, and they've just given up on life."

In a sense, that's what this movie's about. Getting a second chance to live life differently, and how it changes your perspective, and your lot for the future. It gets to the core of fundamental human issues, and the desire of every son to please his father and know that the father is proud of his child. □

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Separating the two time-lines visually helps sell the dramatic storyline.

By Paul Wardle

The dual time travel nature of *FREQUENCY* presents problems for the film's production designer and effects artists alike. If viewers have to wonder whether the scene is in 1969 or 1999, any subtlety in the storyline or performances would be lost. Rhythm & Hues effects supervisor Bill Westenhofer noted the film will utilize a "time stutter" to signal scenes from the past. "The frame [of the film] will just kind of stutter and repeat a bit," said Westenhofer of the editorial post-production operation. Westenhofer noted that to the "time stutter" is added an "effects line," which Westenhofer likened to the motion smearing imagery in *THE MATRIX* and music videos by the Rolling Stones. "You see multiple pieces of past frames simultaneously, where things kind of morph a bit from part to part." It shows you a slight discontinuity in the person or thing being affected.

A key scene in the movie centers around an Aurora Borealis lighting effect in the sky. "It's going to be created in 3-D," said Westenhofer, "in particle systems. We're really trying to capture a lot of the rippling effects. Aurora is formed by particles streaming into the atmosphere. At different altitudes, it excites different molecules, different colors, so the particles we generate will pick up those traits. It's art-directed a bit to show a slightly warmer Aurora Borealis in the 1969 era and a cooler one in 1999, just to distinguish the two."



Quaid as fireman Frank Sullivan. Scenes in the past will feature an editorial "time stutter" and a *MATRIX*-like discontinuity effect.

Westenhofer worked closely with director/producer Greg Hoblit to get the right look, even adding animatics in the later stages. Often he has to create effects that will happen behind the actors. As part of the story, Detective John Sullivan is able to contact his thought-to-be deceased father over a ham radio and warn him against what ultimately caused his death. By preventing the father's death, Sullivan has changed history, and the house that the young, orphaned Sullivan grew up in, reflects this. It transforms from a bachelor pad, to a family atmosphere, rebuilt and landscaped by his more conscientious father. All of this magic takes place as a backdrop to the central actions of the characters in foreground.

As Westenhofer explained

this sequence, we get a clearer picture of how it might look. "We have a motion control camera," he said. "We're going to shoot the actors fighting in one of the takes, and then the set dresser is going to come in and change the set, redress it to look like the new version, possibly even moving some furniture around a little bit. We'll shoot again with the motion control camera, and our job will then be to pull the actors out of one place and kind of marry them to both, with the transition happening behind them."

This shot and one just before it, where a hand metamorphosizes into a withered stump on screen, were the most difficult to achieve for Westenhofer. Unlike many films that have all the bugs worked out of their effects systems before shooting commences, director Hoblit's improvisational approach to directing meant a challenge for Westenhofer, in adapting to the changing circumstances. "From talking with Greg, I know how much I really have to have defined at the time, and how much room we have to play later."

And Westenhofer had to keep the set safe for the film's firefighting effects. In creating the explosions for the firefighting scenes, there is always danger, not for Westenhofer and his people, but for the actors and regular crew members. "Whenever you plan an effects shot, it's like building a bridge," Westenhofer explained. "You build in such a safety margin, that the chances of something going wrong are minimal." □

sor Brian Green, one of the world's leading proponents of Super String Theory, consulting his book, *The Elegant Universe*. "People know when they're being hoodwinked, and when it's the real deal," said Hoblit about the effort to make the film's premise both believable and understandable.

The film's idea of parallel universes moving at different speeds, with rivers and tributaries of information travelling between them was confirmed as a possibility by Green. In *FREQUENCY*, Frank talking on the radio in 1969 would be one tributary and John talking in 1999, intersecting with him, is conceivable within the rules of physics. According to Hoblit, scientists are still divided on this, but many other top scientists do agree with Green's theories, and if they're right, then time travel could be a reality.

An interesting portion of the film includes legendary intellectual talk show master Dick Cavett. Old footage of Cavett from 1969 was used, "playing behind Frank when he's talking to John in the first conversation," explained Hoblit. "While John is talking in that conversation, I aged Brian [Green] up to



Screenwriter Toby Emmerich on the set, a former music exec who also serves as the film's exec producer.

66 years and got Dick Cavett to come in and film a conversation with him 30 years later. And that's playing behind John while he's speaking. In both of the Cavett/Green conversations, they're talking about the current thinking in physics. All of these theories, Super String Theory, Dot Theory, tributaries of information, parallel universes, etc., are all planted during those conversations." □

FINAL DEST

X-FILES alums Glen Morgan & James Wong

By Robin Brunet

After years of bringing alien abductions, cosmic wars and doomsday cults to television, Glen Morgan and James Wong are attempting something new for their theatrical debut: subtlety. It's not what fans have come to expect from the writing/producing team, and it runs contradictory to the teenage serial killer/stalker genre they are dabbling in. *FLIGHT 180* is, if you take the duo at face value, about psychology and spiritualism, not cheap thrills. Try to discuss the crowd-pleasing merits of the *SCREAM* series with either of them, and their expressions turn sour. They are

apparently more interested in the philosophical concepts of death, and they are spending \$23 million of New Line Cinema's money to hammer home the point on celluloid. The film is likely to undergo a name change to *FINAL DESTINATION* when it hits movie screens March 17.

A brief visit to the set of Morgan and Wong's *FLIGHT 180* indicates the duo may be putting New Line's money where their mouths are. They did not hire recognizable talent; nor did they spend the cash on slambang makeup or optical effects. The production design is admittedly intriguing, but something they hope will disturb audiences on a "subliminal" level.

Morgan and Wong's approach is entirely different from the one the makers of *THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT* profited so handsomely from while *FLIGHT 180* was still in production in Vancouver. Morgan and Wong want to creep-out movie-goers via the brain instead of the short hairs. "I have no idea how successful we'll be," Wong said several months before *BLAIR WITCH* took North America by storm. "You can only hope for the best."

By film production standards, *FLIGHT 180* is just another movie being lensed in a province that offers a great exchange on the American buck. But Vancouver is Disneyworld for Morgan and Wong: this is where their breakthrough series, *THE X-FILES*, first took shape; and it was home turf for the recently cancelled *MILLENNIUM*. "It



Morgan and Wong on the set, taking a stab at teen horror. The duo re-wrote the screenplay by Jeffrey Reddick; Morgan (l) co-produces and Wong (r) directs.

seemed appropriate to shoot *FLIGHT 180* here," said Morgan. "We know the territory and crews. And we have had good luck here."

The duo were filming the mid-air explosion of an airplane. The crew had commandeered a Burnaby warehouse to shoot the scene, and the interior of the building was dominated by a large section of fuselage mounted on enormous hydraulic gimbals. With each cry of action from director Wong, the fuselage bucked, dipped, reared and generally gave the extras and stunt crew strapped inside a roller coaster ride.

The airplane explosion results after Alex Browning (Devon Sawa), embarking on a trip to Paris with his high school French class, suddenly sees a vision of the plane blowing up, panics, and insists that everyone get off the craft. In the melee that ensues, seven people, including Alex, disembark, and in the best *TWILIGHT ZONE* tradition, his premonition comes true.

Even though his intuition saves lives, Alex comes to believe that he and the other survivors have briefly cheated death but will not be able to evade their fate for very long. One by one, the fugitives from fate meet their end, and Alex—who conveniently befriends a young temptress named Clear (played by Ali Larter)—tries to make sense of the chaos while being hunted by the FBI.

As trite as the story may appear on pa-

per, it provided production designer John Willett with a clever approach to rendering it on the big screen. "We interviewed him for the task, and the first thing he told us was 'There are a few things in your script that are bullshit,' and he was right," Morgan recalled. "Right off the bat, we loved his passion. Then he started talking about how all the sets should be skewed until death visits the survivors of the plane crash, to indicate the world is not right, and we hired him on the spot."

If *FLIGHT 180* attracts a following, it is because of Willett's notion that since the seven survivors have cheated death, the world they live in seems some-

what "off," slightly abnormal. Willett, whose previous Vancouver assignment was *LAKE PLACID*, accomplished this by using forced perspective—again, not in a Roman Polanski sort of way, but so that viewers are made to feel ill at ease without knowing why. "On *HALLOWEEN H20* we built one forced perspective set, but on *FLIGHT 180* there are many," he said. "The most interesting set for me was the morgue which the survivors break into through a skylight and where a major exposition takes place." Willett and crew designed the morgue as a trapezoid with an extremely high ceiling, Edwardian industrial metalwork and walls which narrow as you look up.

As a frustrated Wong called for repeated takes of the death throes of the airplane (sometimes the shaking is too much, sometimes not enough, and the lightning effects come at the wrong moment), one can experience a subtle example of Willett's handiwork: a forced perspective indoor boarding ramp to the airplane. Upon casual inspection, it seems like the real thing. Have somebody walk through it, though, and he appears to grow proportionately in relation to the size of the structure.

Willett was concerned early on that no matter how well built the set was, it could be photographed the wrong way. "If you shoot from the wrong angle you can either increase the weirdness or decrease it," he explained. To ensure the filmmakers

TINATION!

make their horror movie debut at New Line.

blocked each scene properly, Willett wrote a six-page treatise for the crew titled "To Skew or Not To Skew."

Willett also had a hand in the color palette used in FLIGHT 180. "I eliminated blue and other cold colors, and employed blue only in a few key scenes to impart the greatest menace," he said. In all cases, once death claims each crash survivor, colors brighten and the forced perspective and other odd-angled sets become normal.

As Wong uttered an oath and called for yet another set-up of the airplane death throes, Ariel Shaw, of Valencia, California-based Ariel Images, explained how computers aid the formation of special effects before post production takes place. "Some of our airport sequences are filmed using an enormous green screen, and we project CGI storyboard effects onto that screen while a scene is being filmed," he said. "On playback we can check the eyelines of the actors and determine what details need to be added to make the scene work. After the scene is complete, we take the green screen plate and use it to work on the effects as they will appear on the final film—such as using model airplanes for the actual mid-air explosion." Cinema Production Services in L.A. will use an 11-foot model of the airplane for taxiing scenes and a six-foot mock-up for the blast.

After another failed attempt at coordinating pneumatic tremors and lightning, the fuselage set is closed, allowing Morgan to ruminate on his first theatrical production. "I've been fascinated with death since I was a kid, but to tell you the truth, Jim and I aren't that original when it comes to writing," he said. "We draw from Val Lewton movies, JAWS, PSYCHO—we even looked at Bergman's HOUR OF THE WOLF when developing FLIGHT 180. The original treatment for the film was written by Jeffrey Reddick. Co-producer Craig Perry devel-

"It just doesn't pander to the audience," Wong insisted. "I don't want to copy last year's hits. I want to give people something new or twisted."



Morgue attendant Tony Todd (r), of the CANDYMAN series, with Devon Sawa, of IDLE HANDS, and Alli Larter, a former resident of THE HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL. New Line opens the duo's take on teen horror nationwide March 17.

oped the story, and at this point it was brought to the attention of Morgan and Wong.

"The original story had a bogeyman in it," Morgan recalled. "We didn't want a bogeyman, and told Perry and New Line chief Bob Shaye how we would develop the screenplay were we to write and direct. Well, Bob loved our ideas, and Jim was thankfully given director's cut."

Later on, Wong spends several minutes discussing his friendship with Morgan—which began during high school—and their working relationship. "During different shows we either write scripts together word for word, or rewrite each other, or do differ-

ent scenes," he said. "On this project we wrote the script together."

Wong insists that FLIGHT 180 is commercial and mainstream. "It just doesn't pander to the audience is all," he said. "I don't want to copy last year's hits, I want to give people something new or twisted."

Wong called his first feature directing assignment "a dream come true. When talks first arose about me directing, I didn't even tell my wife, I was so scared of jinxing my chances."

Wong said he wants to do a good enough job on FLIGHT 180 that he'll be asked to helm something else. However, he has never considered or will ever entertain the idea of working apart from his long-time colleague. "I'd like to produce his next movie the next time around," he remarked. If they have their druthers, that movie could be a continuation of SPACE: ABOVE AND BEYOND. "We are both so proud of that show, but a feature movie would be expensive, and who knows what Fox is willing to give us? We'd even be happy with a TV-movie, if it can be arranged."

For the meantime, there is the fuselage scene to cope with, and after that a set-piece death

scene and location shooting throughout Vancouver. For his part, Morgan is excited about viewing the finished product. "This is a big experiment in seeing if we can cause a sense of unease and dread throughout the movie instead of shocks," he said. "Jim has come up with a lot of interesting filmmaking tricks, and he has a good little visual at the end of the story that warns audiences not to be too comfortable with our happy ending. After all, you can't beat death like you can kill a shark in the water or blast an alien out of a spaceship. If we have any message in this film, it is that the only way you can cheat death is to live life to its fullest." □

VOYAGER'S TREK "MEMORIAL"

A powerful examination of the devastating effects of warfare, with a nod to creator Gene Roddenberry.

By Anna Kaplan

During February television sweeps, STAR TREK: VOYAGER will be presenting, amongst other programming, an episode that could have been taken from the front pages of a contemporary newspaper, but with a science fiction twist. Called "Memorial," it dramatizes the aftereffects of a wartime massacre. On a planet in the Delta Quadrant, a group of military personnel attempting to evacuate refugees meets some resistance, and during the chaos and confusion, many innocent civilians get murdered. In the VOYAGER episode, this event has already occurred hundreds

of years ago, and a memorial placed at the spot on the planet causes those who pass by to experience the events as flashbacks. This happens to Tom Paris (Robert Duncan McNeill), Chakotay (Robert Beltran), Harry Kim (Garrett Wang), and Neelix (Ethan Phillips). In "Memorial," story by executive producer Brannon Braga and teleplay by new staff writer Robin Burger, the four begin to suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome as they try and come to terms with the apparent memories.

Explained Wang, "Basically four of us go on an away mission, Chakotay, Kim, Neelix, and Paris, a two-week, extended, away mission. What we don't know is that we actually investigated a planet [where] there is a memorial that is set up. It's been in operation for something like three or four hundred years. The memorial is a psionic memorial. Anyone who comes within distance of that planet will start reliving memories of a massacre which has happened on that location, on that planet, three or four hundred years ago, a massacre which is not unlike the headlines recently with the Korean War, Korean civilians that were killed underneath the bridge."

Wang was referring to events near the village of No Gun Ri during the early stages



Garret Wang as Kim, gunning down innocent civilians in VOYAGER's special February sweeps episode, "Memorial," a shocking look at the cost of war.

of the Korean War in 1950, when American soldiers attempting to shelter civilians under a bridge may have in fact killed hundreds of innocent people. The tragedy was not well-documented or explained, and only recently has the United States Government and the U.S. Army attempted to begin a thorough investigation. Wang noted that what happens during the course of the television episode is, "the same thing. The troops were tired. Somebody shot first amongst the troops. Then everyone thought the colonists, the refugees that we are there to evacuate, were the ones who were shooting us. They really weren't. It's just mass confusion and hysteria which led to the annihilation of maybe, 80-some-odd colonists, wiped out, vaporized, and the evidence covered up. But somebody came out and spoke out about what had happened. It was those people who eventually set up the memorial. When we find it, we don't know what is going on, obviously."

Each of the Voyager crew members who experience flashbacks have similar but distinct memories, which seem to them to be real. "We get back on the ship and each one of us are experiencing our own flashbacks," said Wang. "We are all playing different roles. We are not experiencing the same

flashbacks. Kim's flashback is of a soldier who goes crazy, and escapes the craziness by going into some tunnels. In these tunnels he actually comes across a couple of civilians who he ends up shooting and killing. Neelix's flashback involves the children of the refugees. Chakotay also has a different flashback. His flashback is not [as] the main commander of the force, but somebody who is definitely more second-in-command, I would say, similar to on the ship. Paris has his flashback as one of the soldiers, also."

McNeill explained that it will seem to the television viewer that the crew members are actually experiencing these events,

as they seem real to each of them. "The way this memorial works is it puts you in the experience and you don't question it, you just assume that this is all part of what you are supposed to be doing," said McNeill. "We were in this battle zone trying to evacuate some refugees, and some of the refugees didn't want to leave, so they started firing back at us. Even though supposedly we were doing something noble by helping out these innocent people, we ended up, in the chaos of this fire fight with the rebel faction, murdering a lot of innocent people and losing our heads in the middle of this very hot, intense battle situation, and making some catastrophic mistakes, and killing women and children and men and innocent people. It looks like it's us doing it, even though this is only a memory that we have been given by this technology. Ultimately we discover that it wasn't real."

The Voyager goes back to the planet to try and figure out what really happened. "Some of us want to dismantle the whole thing," said Wang. "Paris and I are very much against it, because we've been traumatized by these experiences. But Janeway [Kate Mulgrew] makes the decision that we have to keep it intact, and we actually should repair it so it's functioning. It will



Wang, Ethan Phillips as Neelix and Robert Duncan McNeill as Paris, making a mistake in the heat of battle in "Memorial," a very Roddenberrian look at the moral questions of violence, including Trek's own easy gunplay.

“Every time I fire that phaser, if this were a real situation and I had a 9 millimeter in my hand and I started firing at someone, there’s real consequences to that.”

—Robert Duncan McNeill—

function for another three or four hundred years, because she believes, along with Neelix, that keeping this memorial there is a lesson for people to learn from so that this type of a tragedy does not happen again.”

“Memorial” was shot mainly on a Paramount soundstage, with one day of location for the outside of the jungle-covered planet. Despite the seriousness of the subject matter, the actors relished the experience. Said Wang, “I did enjoy doing it. I think that’s something that I’ve gotten quite used to doing, like the episode ‘The Chute’ or even ‘Timeless.’ That sort of angst-ridden Kim is definitely something I can pull off fairly easily. It was a fun episode to work on, strenuous, but still it was worth it. It is going to turn out very nicely. We shot the majority of it on stage 16, where they came up with this fantastic exterior jungle-type set, massive and impressive. We did go one day of location just to shoot some exterior planet when we first beam down to the planet that has this memorial. We went out to the Disney ranch which is pretty close to Valencia, for that one day of exterior work.”

Laughed McNeill, “It was a lot of fun, too, Robert Beltran, Garrett, Ethan and I getting out there and playing army, just like we were kids. We kept joking about it. We are getting paid to go out and pretend to play war. I think it’s going to be a really good episode. Allan Kroeker directed the episode. He just shoots very visually interesting episodes. They always have a lot of tension, just in their pacing and in the style of shooting that he has. Allan was particularly appropriate for this show, with so much tension, in the war and in the battle sequences.”

Added McNeill, seriously, “The whole episode is about post-traumatic stress syndrome, and the sort of mysteri-

ous way that we got it, and trying to solve that riddle. But along the way there are some great moral questions about not forgetting things, even things that aren’t very pretty and aren’t very flattering sometimes. How horrible events are important to remember to learn those lessons. I thought it was a really great, classic STAR TREK episode, with its great moral drama, and it had a great sci-fi twist in terms of the way the memorial worked, actually putting people through the experience.”

VOYAGER will be showcasing other completely different episodes during February sweeps. One, called “Tsunkatse,” brings WWF star “The Rock” to Voyager, along with DEEP SPACE NINE actors J. G. Hertzler and Jeffrey Combs, who are playing the roles of Delta Quadrant aliens involved in heavy-duty, fighting games. Another, “Spirit Folk,” revisits the Irish Village created on the holodeck for “Fair Haven,” the episode in which Captain Janeway finds romance

Janeway (Kate Mulgrew) strides amid the bodies of the battle’s innocent victims, a powerful sixth season episode.



with a holodeck character. In “Spirit Folk,” the citizens of the Irish village begin to suspect the constantly-disappearing crew members of possessing black magic. This is a humorous hour of television, as the holodeck creations try to catch the evil practitioners among them.

But for some, “Memorial” represents more of the spirit of the original STAR TREK series, which addressed moral and ethical dilemmas. Said McNeill, “I know that over the years, I’ve always felt that one thing that STAR TREK didn’t do, and most of television doesn’t do very well, is show the real horror and the consequences of violence. Because we are a fantasy show and a science fiction show, we need a lot of exploding ships and a lot of phaser fights and things like that. Because it’s science fiction, it doesn’t quite seem so violent or so real. Over the years we’ve done this show, I’ve always said, every time I fire that phaser, if this were a real situation, a contemporary situation, and I had a 9 millimeter, automatic pistol in my hand, and I started firing at someone, there’s real consequences to that. Even though we are firing phasers and killing bad aliens, still there is death involved. Over the past six years, I’m sure Tom Paris has taken out quite a few aliens. If you translate that to real and what it would be like to be in the military and to have on your conscience the death of, I don’t know how many Tom Paris has killed over the last six years, but he has killed a lot of aliens. That’s a real moral issue that we skim across most often, the weight on your conscience of having killed people along the way, along this journey. I thought it was actually a great episode to bring some truth and some reality to our show in terms of the consequences of war and violence, and that kind of heated situation and heated emotions. With that in mind, I thought it was a very important episode.”

The Great Bird of the Galaxy, creator Gene Roddenberry, would probably be very proud of “Memorial.” □

STAR TREK VOYAGER

Veteran producer Brannon Braga on shepherding the last Trek series home.

By Anna L. Kaplan

VOYAGER's season six began with the resolution of the cliffhanger "Equinox," which surprisingly left some of the Equinox crew on Voyager, although not John Savage as Captain Ransom. Also returning for the sixth season and the seventh, was Kate Mulgrew, as Captain Janeway. After a long period of rumors and reports that Mulgrew wanted to leave VOYAGER, she signed on for the rest of the journey. She and fiancé Tom Hagan married during the hiatus, and then she returned to work. Jeri Ryan, who plays Seven of Nine, also reportedly entered into difficult contract negotiations, and also decided to stay with the cast. Explained co-creator, executive producer and TREK chief Rick Berman, "We have solidified a deal for this year and next year with both Kate Mulgrew and Jeri Ryan. We feel that the chemistry in the whole group was working very well last year. We are going to try and keep it going, and keep it fresh."

Berman gave his assessment of season five, along with his feelings about season six, saying, "I was very pleased with VOYAGER. I think that we managed to come up with a great mix of shows. I think we had some charming shows, and some action-packed shows, and some fun shows. I think we got



TNG veterans Marina Sirtis as Counselor Troi and Dwight Schultz as Barclay made a guest appearance last December in sixth season's "Pathfinder."

a little bit of the balance back, with a little less focus on Seven of Nine, which I think had been overdone a bit, the previous year. I think it was a very fun season that the fans seemed to have responded very well to. Our major goal for this coming season is to keep that up, with a good balance of the types of stories we are telling, and characters that are being focused on in individual episodes. We have some terrific stuff coming up. But there [are] no major changes, no hidden agendas about bringing the ship home in the immediate future, or not bringing the ship home in the immediate future, no big course corrections on VOYAGER."

Also returning sixth season is the delightful Naomi Wildman, played by Scarlett Pomers, in the episode "Survival Instinct." This, the second episode of VOYAGER's sixth season, was written by Ronald D. Moore, who moved over briefly to VOYAGER after the conclusion of DEEP SPACE NINE. Moore said about his only VOYAGER script, "It's a Seven of Nine show. There was a B'E-lanna Torres (Roxann Dawson) episode that I had in mind that was a notion that we never got around to doing on DS9, that I thought could be adapted for Torres as a Klingon show. I asked to put that one off a bit, so I could get into one of their characters a little more."



**Voyager's Delta
Quadrant ensemble (l
to r) Jeri Ryan, Robert
Beltran, Tim Russ,
Kate Mulgrew, Garrett
Wang, Robert Picardo,
Roxann Dawson,
Robert Duncan McNeill
and Ethan Phillips.**

STAR TREK VOYAGER

MY FAIR BORG

Behind-the-scenes of fifth season's "Someone To Watch Over Me."

By Anna Kaplan

When thinking back on VOYAGER's fifth season, executive producer Brannon Braga enthused, "One of my favorites of the year is 'Someone to Watch Over Me,' the Doctor-Seven show. It's very, very charming, and heartbreaking." In the episode, Seven finally decides to go on a date, and the Doctor coaches her on proper etiquette. Along the way, the Doctor realizes he is falling in love with Seven.

Noted scripter Michael Taylor, who worked from a story by Braga, "When an action show finds that it can do a comedy, it's gained a certain level of confidence in its actors, in its writing staff, just in a general sense of what the show is about, that it can loosen up a bit."

Enthused Jeri Ryan, "Even the editors were coming up to me on the set and saying, 'This never happens, but everyone was coming in out of the other editing room, and stopping what they were doing and watching this show while we were cutting it together.' They said it was just so charming that everybody loved it."

Robert Duncan McNeill, who plays Tom Paris, directed the show. "It was a very unusual episode for STAR TREK, because it's a very traditional romantic comedy," he said. "I have to admit, when I first read it I was a little nervous. I thought, this is not what someone would expect from a STAR TREK show. But the response has just been incredible. A lot of people are saying it's going to be one of our best episodes. It's got the Doctor and Seven of Nine in a kind of MY FAIR LADY situation, with the Doctor trying to teach Seven about love, and improve her social skills, and in the process finds himself having feelings for

her."

In a subplot Ethan Phillips as Neelix gives a tour of the ship to a repressed alien monk, played by Scott Thompson of KIDS IN THE HALL. "We want to get something from his race," said Phillips. "They are a highly moral race, and before they can give it, we have to make sure that they see us as an equally moral race. I am entrusted to show him our ship and all our functions, so that he can assess our righteousness. The guy turns out to be a lush, and a complete drunk. It's kind of like that movie with Peter O'Toole, MY FAVORITE YEAR; the guy is entrusted with keeping him sober. It's a funny part and a really neat role."

McNeill continued, "I really enjoyed working with Bob. He never gets tired of figuring out new ideas, and funny moments, and quirky things to do. Jeri found, I think, a different kind of humanity in Seven of Nine than we have seen before, a real kind of child-like sense of humor in her character. Seven and Bob sing together in a real nice, little moment."

McNeill added, "The ending wasn't written when we shot the whole episode. When the whole script wasn't written, we were just sort of making it up, shooting it as

Robert Duncan McNeill, who directed the episode, as Paris, looks in on the training in progress. Said McNeill, "When I first read it, I was a little nervous."



Robert Picardo plays Henry Higgins to Jeri Ryan's Eliza Doolittle, schooling Seven Of Nine on the etiquette of her first date, with charming results.

it was being written. It's very hard to plan ahead and say, 'You don't want to give away too much in this moment. You want to save it for the end when you realize your feelings.' It definitely kept us on our toes, kept us aware of how much we were telling, in what order we were telling the story, and not to have the Doctor fall in love with Seven in Act One, to really find the whole journey, and fill it out fully. It's a real actors' show, so I felt particularly excited, being an actor, to work on a show that really depended on the performances and the subtleties that the actors could bring to it."

What about the end? Said McNeill, "Because it's two series regulars that are playing around with love, that's always a very dangerous subject. If you go too far with it, you've got to live with the consequences. If you are not ready to deal with it on an ongoing basis on the series, then you have to be really careful with how far you go."

The ending was filmed some time after primary shooting finished. Laughed Robert Picardo, "This episode is like the movie CASABLANCA, because we shot it without knowing what the end will be. It's like shooting a romantic story, without knowing the payoff. But CASABLANCA turned out pretty well. I'm hoping that we will be equally fortunate."

The writers chose not to reveal the Doctor's feelings to Seven. At the end, the Doctor is alone at Sandrine's, playing the Gershwin tune "Someone to Watch Over Me." □

Added executive producer Brannon Braga, "It's a spectacular Seven of Nine episode. A large part of the episode takes place in Seven's past when she was a drone, and it's the story of the Donner party with six little drones, including Seven of Nine. It deals with issues of her individuality and a dark secret from her past. You get to meet three drones from her original Unimatrix, Two of Nine, Five of Nine, and Eight of Nine as they come to find her on Voyager for some mysterious reason."

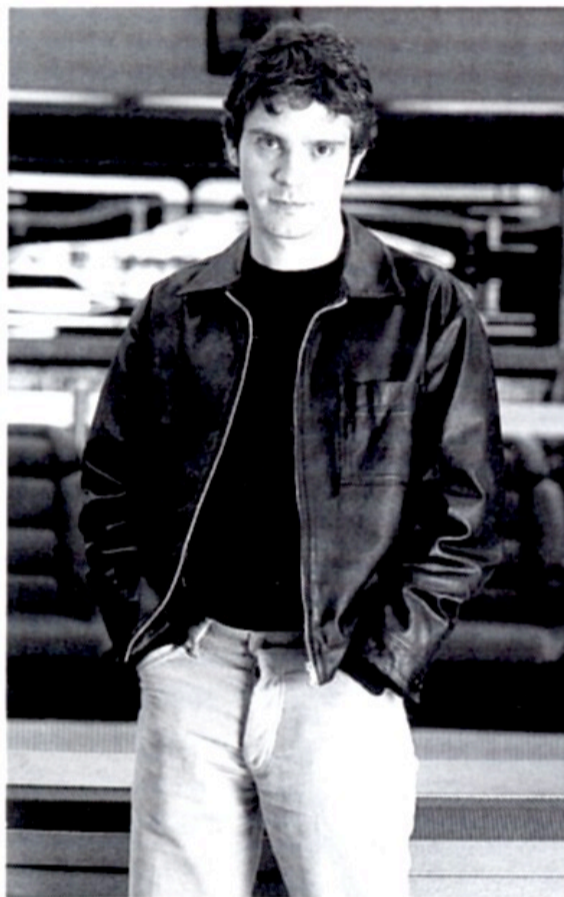
Noted Braga of Moore's planned Klingon episode, "Barge of the Dead," "B'Elanna has a spiritual awakening of sorts, and ends up in the Klingon equivalent of Hell. If you imagine Dante's *Inferno* done Klingon style, you'll get an idea about what that episode is all about."

At first both Moore and Braga seemed to be happy to be working together again. Braga and Moore co-wrote the feature films *STAR TREK: GENERATIONS* and *FIRST CONTACT*, as well as working together on *THE NEXT GENERATION*. Things quickly took a wrong turn, and Moore left after only about a month. The split was amicable on the surface, but took an emotional toll on many, leaving fans somewhat confused and unhappy that whatever problems existed could not be resolved. Early season six episodes listed Moore and Joe Menosky as co-executive producers. After Moore's departure, Ken Biller was lured back to the franchise as co-executive producer. Biller's former assistant and writer Rob Doherty joined the writing staff, which included Michael Taylor and Bryan Fuller.

Early in season six, actors took the director's chair. For the first time on *VOYAGER*, Roxann Dawson directed an episode called "Riddles," which aired in November. Veteran Robert Picardo (the Doctor) directed "One Small Step," *VOYAGER*'s take on early Mars exploration, also seen in November. Other episodes included "Tinker, Tailor, Doctor, Spy," a humorous show centered on the Doctor, and "Alice," about a sentient ship that intrigues Tom Paris (Robert Duncan McNeill).

“We may, emphasis on may, see a Janeway romance this year. We tried it last year, and we would like to try it again in a more in depth way.”

—Exec. Prod. Brannon Braga—



Executive producer Brannon Braga, a TNG veteran with visual flair, imagination and a dedication to writing excellence.

He becomes really obsessed with the whole thing. He calls me on the Enterprise, and I come down to Earth where he is based in San Francisco, and basically counsel him. I think he's falling back into his holofantasy dementia thing. There are some lovely scenes between me and Dwight. But I don't interact with the rest of the cast. I just worked with him."

Continued Sirtis, "The characters are as they are in *VOYAGER*. He hasn't created fantasy characters like he did on our show. They are playing themselves. I suppose he researched their databases. He says in one of the scenes that we had together, that when he left the Enterprise, he felt like he'd lost his family. So he recreated a new family on the holodeck. Because of his obsession with Voyager, it was them, as opposed to us. Probably the thing that has come out of his head is the fact that he's like their best friend."

Sirtis laughed, "That probably wouldn't be the case if he actually met them, in real life, because he is a bit of a dork."

Sirtis enjoyed her brief visit to *VOYAGER* and said, "I've heard through the grapevine

In more general terms, Braga said about season six, "We may, emphasis on *may*, see a Janeway romance this year. We tried it last year, and we'd like to try it again in a more in-depth way. We are going to be introducing some scary new alien races, as usual. *VOYAGER* has become known for its two-part and now two-hour episodes, in sweeps periods. We have every intention of keeping that alive. We are hoping to dig in some new territory this season."

A very special *VOYAGER* episode aired in December bringing two characters from *THE NEXT GENERATION*, Counselor Troi (Marina Sirtis) and Reginald Barclay (Dwight Schultz) to *VOYAGER*. Called "Pathfinder," it was directed by Mike Vejar. Explained Sirtis, "Barclay becomes obsessed with trying to make contact with Voyager. He has this theory, that if he does these technical things that I don't understand, as Marina or as Troi, he will be able to make contact with them.

continued on page 31

VOYAGER SEASON FIVE EPISODE GUIDE

By Anna L. Kaplan

"I made an error in judgment, Chakotay. It was short-sighted, and it was selfish. And now all of us are paying for my mistake."

—Captain Janeway.

NIGHT

★★1/2

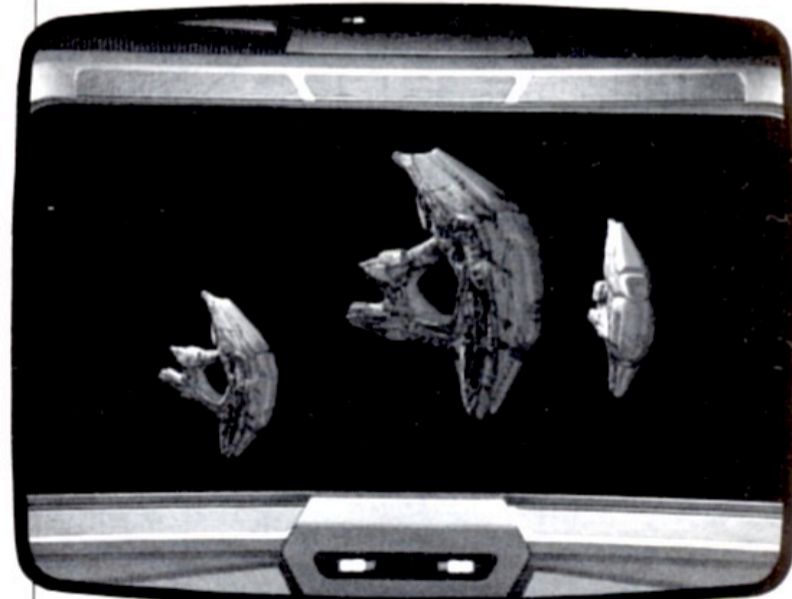
10/14/98. Production #195. Stardate 52081.2. Written by Brannon Braga and Joe Menosky. Directed by David Livingston.

Voyager has completed only two months of a two year passage through a region of space devoid of stars. The ship suddenly loses all power and is surrounded by three night vessels, with intruders aboard, one of whom has been injured. Another huge ship swoops in and takes out all the alien ships. It is a Malon vessel, leaking theta radiation, with a Mr. Emk (Ken Magee) in charge. The night aliens are indigenous to the dark region of space. They are dying, because the Malon, who use a spatial vortex to get to the region, are using the area to dump their contaminated antimatter. Mr. Emk will show Voyager the way out in exchange for the night alien the Doctor is treating. The night alien asks for Voyager's help.

It was very hard to believe that Captain Janeway would pop in and out of a depression severe enough to keep her in her quarters for two months. Said co-writer and supervising producer Joe Menosky, "A good, solid melancholy is in some ways a dignified response to a profound, personal, introspective crisis. But I don't think it was really sold. If you are going to have a big crisis like that, you can't do it in the course of a single episode, wrap it up at the end and make it believable. It was the wrong way to go, and it did not come off particularly well, no excuses. It was just a lot of pieces of different story elements."

Executive producer and co-writer Brannon Braga added, "To kick off the season, why not have Voyager hit a region of space that is utterly devoid of anything? It's a dangerous way to start a story, of course. I don't feel that the night aliens and the Malon freighter guys were all that captivating. I liked it, but I wouldn't say it was one of our best."

Travelling in a starless section of the Delta Quadrant in "Night," Voyager encounters threatening alien ships in the fifth season opener.



"As long as I exist, you are in danger. All life on Voyager is in danger."

—One (J. Paul Boehmer)

DRONE

★★★1/2

10/21/98. Production #196. Stardate unknown. Story by Bryan Fuller and Harry Doc Kloor. Teleplay by Bryan Fuller, Brannon Braga, and Joe Menosky. Directed by Les Landau.

Some of Seven of Nine's nanoprobes infect the Doctor's holodeck. The emitter turns into a Borg maturation chamber, containing a fetal Borg with

STAR TREK VOYAGER

JERI RYAN, BORG BABE

Trek's heavenly body on energizing the franchise as Seven of Nine continues to rediscover her humanity.

By Anna Kaplan

Jeri Ryan feels completely at ease with Seven of Nine, STAR TREK: VOYAGER's Borg beauty. She said emphatically, "I have no problem with the overtly sexual, physical appearance of the character, because of the way she is written, because of her strength, and because of her incredible intelligence, and the richness of the way the character itself is written, and her development, and her steady progression toward humanity, and her constant rediscovery of humanity. I think she is a wonderful, very positive female portrayal."

It seems that both male and female fans have embraced the character of Seven of Nine. Fifth season saw the character facing maternal feelings for the first time in "Drone" in which Seven became a kind of mother and mentor to a Borg drone who inadvertently sprung up when Seven's nanoprobes got into the Doctor's holoemitter. Recalled Ryan, "That was one of my favorite episodes. The actor who we got to play the drone was a wonderful actor, J. Paul Boehmer. It was a real pleasure to work on. It was Seven experiencing true loss. She thinks back to her parents."

In "Infinite Regress," Seven began to suffer from the Borg equivalent of a multiple personality disorder, as proximity to a device called the Borg vinculum brought out the voices of humans and aliens that she had helped to assimilate. Recalled Ryan, "'Infinite Regress' was a challenge on a lot of different levels. It would have been a challenge anyway if you had two or three weeks to prepare for it. But I didn't. I had no research time. I had never really seen a Ferengi at that point. They were throwing tapes at me from episodes of DS9 that had Ferengis in them, so that I could at least watch how they move and how they talk. They were throwing Klin-



Seven of Nine is discovered frozen on the ice-encrusted hulk of Voyager at the opening of fifth season's "Timeless."

gon tapes at me, because really the only Klingon I had encountered was B'Elanna [Roxann Dawson], and that doesn't count because she is only half-Klingon. It was tough. I was really doing it by the seat of my pants, I felt. But it turned out pretty well."

The actress chuckled, "I was about ready to murder executive producer Brannon Braga for writing four pages of Ferengi, but it was fun. That's why you become an actress, to play other people. It's so much fun, especially a character who is as contained most of the time as Seven is, to go to the complete opposite extreme."

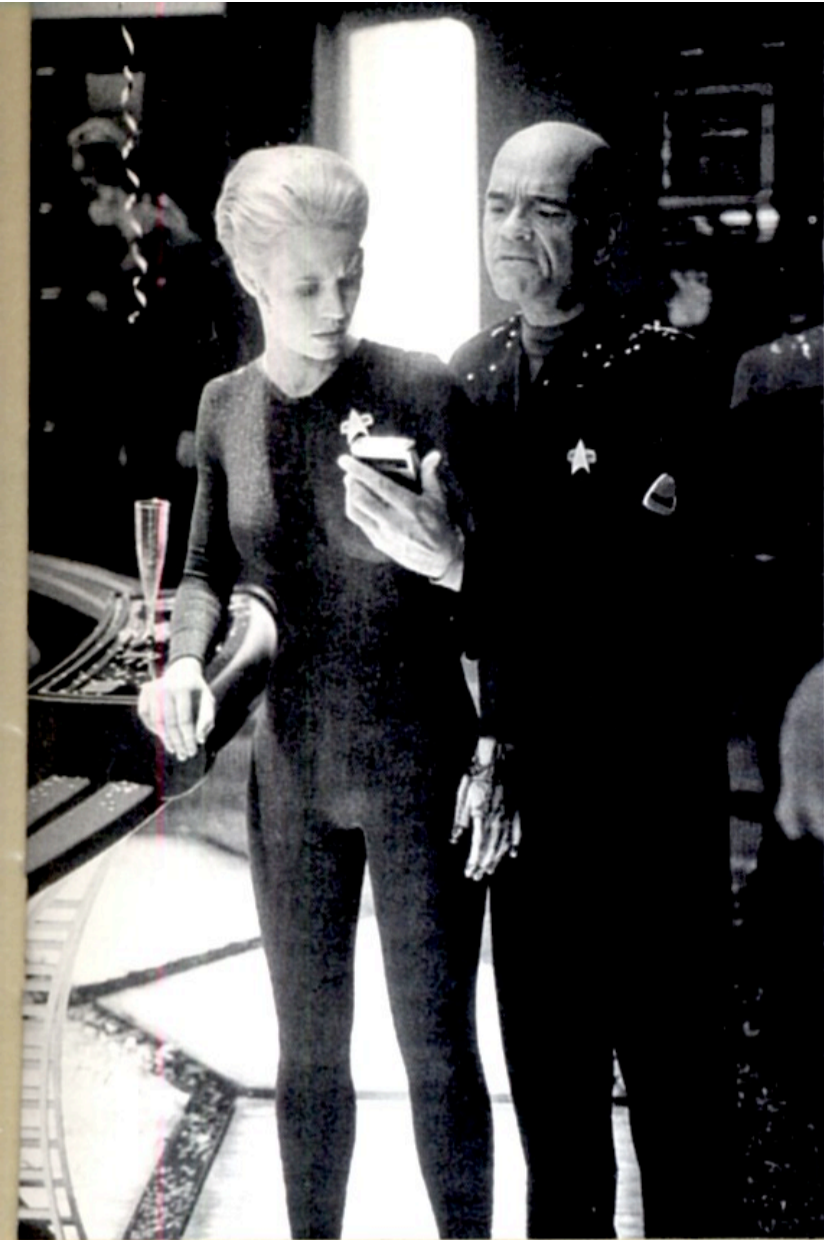
Midway through the fifth season Seven was paired in a number of episodes with Voyager child Naomi Wildman, played by Scarlett Pomers. "Seven never got the chance to be a kid," said Ryan. "That was taken away from her by the Borg. She is living that out now with Naomi, which is great. All of the relationships that the writers are developing with Seven really make sense. It makes sense that she and Naomi would become friends, I think. It makes sense that she and the Doctor would have

the relationship they have. They are both technological beings, so she has that level of respect for him. Also he is her mentor, as Kes [Jennifer Lien] was to him."

Seven of Nine was the focal point of the two-hour VOYAGER "movie" called "Dark Frontier," which brought back the Borg Queen. This extravaganza boasted lots of action sequences, as well as a plot that told the story of Seven's human parents, the Hansens. "That could have been a feature," she said. "I was very impressed with the way that whole show came together, not just the script, but the production values all around were outstanding. The sets were amazing, the effects were amazing. Susanna Thompson, who is a friend of mine, was fun to work with. As the Borg Queen, she did a beautiful job. Scott Wheeler did a phenomenal job on her makeup as he did with FIRST CONTACT."

Ryan discussed the Hansen's backstory, saying, "I loved seeing exactly what made her parents tick and what made them end up the way they did, and exactly how they had gotten there in the first place. It very much had the flavor of Dian Fossey, the woman who studied and lived with gorillas, to it: following the Borg in the wild. I thought it was very well done and very well thought out."

The last fifth season show to prominently feature Seven was called "Relativity," an episode involving time travel, and a mystery. Laughed Ryan, "The time travel things, not having been a science fiction fan in the past, are the scripts that are a little bit tough to follow. It was a challenge just keeping the time frames straight. I got to be in a Starfleet uniform, which was actually very funny. I had just done an online chat three or four days before this script came up. As they always do, one of the fans had asked me when we were going to see Seven in a Starfleet uniform, and I



extremely advanced 29th century technology.

This episode featured wonderful performances by both Jeri Ryan and J. Paul Boehmer as the maturing Borg named One. Said Menosky, "Harry Kloor pitched what we used to call 'Terminator Drone.' Seven's nanoprobes infect the Doctor's holomitter and give rise to a 29th century drone. It was going to be an unstoppable, killer drone. We didn't go that route. We decided to go softer, character-oriented. For once Seven gets to be in the role of mentor in the same way that Janeway has been her mentor, and gets to experience loss. I think the episode was very successful."

Said Braga, "'Drone' is one of my favorites. I just didn't know how to end that show for a long time. At the last minute I realized that it had to end with this drone dying, and what a wonderful moment it would be. Executive producer Rick Berman had the idea that he would sacrifice himself to do it. Jeri Ryan was perfect. It was a classic, great STAR TREK episode, because only Seven of Nine could bring that tear to your eye. Because she didn't fully understand her own emotions, and was experiencing grief for the first time, you felt it as though for the first time."

Trivia note: J. Paul Boehmer played the Kapitan in "The Killing Game."

J. Paul Boehmer as One with Ryan in "Drone," as Seven of Nine trains an extremely advanced 29th century Borg, given accidental birth on the ship.



"I don't feel anything at all."

—B'Elanna Torres

EXTREME RISK

★★1/2

10/28/98. Production #197. Stardate not given. Written by Kenneth Biller. Directed by Cliff Bole.

B'Elanna Torres is using the holodeck to perform orbital skydiving maneuvers, disengaging safety protocols. The Malon have taken Voyager's new multispatial probe in tow. Voyager manages to send it into the atmosphere of a gas giant where its Borg shielding protects it. To withstand the atmosphere of the gas giant and recover the probe, they will have to build a new shuttlecraft, the Delta Flyer, which Tom has already designed. While Tom, Seven and Harry get to work on their project, B'Elanna seems uninterested. Chakotay takes B'Elanna to one of her holoprograms that shows the death of their Maquis comrades, and demands to know what she is doing. B'Elanna admits that since the news of the Maquis defeat, she has lost all feeling. Chakotay promises to help her, giving her the chance to go with the Delta Flyer on its maiden voyage to retrieve the probe.

Writer and supervising producer Ken Biller explained, "The idea for 'Extreme Risk' came from Roxann Dawson. She was interested in this notion of self-harm, the phenomenon that exists, if you look at the psychiatric journals, mostly among women. Because of depression or some mental disorder, people will hurt themselves. It's theorized that people do that because they are trying to provoke some kind of emotional response, it's a very simplistic way of putting it, but to let



Tuvok and Paris with the design for the Delta Flyer in "Extreme Risk," using a new shuttlecraft to descend into the atmosphere of a gas giant.

themselves know that they are still alive. B'Elanna is beginning to experience this phenomenon of feeling numb. We have to put this in science fiction terms, so she was going on the holodeck to try and get herself hurt to prove to herself that she was still alive."

He continued, "It may have felt a little forced. Why don't we know anything about it before? Brannon felt pretty confident that since we don't see B'Elanna every week, we have no idea what's going on with her. I loved Roxann's performance. I liked the scene a lot between Chakotay and B'Elanna where the truth comes out. What I didn't like is that it relied on a previous episode, which was the news that the Voyager crew got that the Maquis had been wiped out. Through finally talking to Chakotay, explaining what she was going through, and him telling her to get the hell over it, she realizes that she wasn't about to give up on her life. She's on the road to recovery, maybe. She realizes that when the ship is in trouble, she's got to help her Voyager family. I think doing that made her feel a little more alive, doing her job well, and helping the crew."

"Voyager may be the last defense against an all-out invasion of Earth."

—Captain Janeway

IN THE FLESH

★★★

11/4/98. Production #198. Stardate 52136.4. Written by Nicholas Sagan. Directed by David Livingston.

Chakotay is on the grounds of Starfleet Academy, watching groundskeeper Boothby (Ray Walston) and Admiral Bullock (Tucker Smallwood). Something is clearly amiss. Chakotay talks to Boothby. He also meets a woman named Archer (Kate Vernon). They witness someone "revert" to another form. Tuvok arrives, and does the Vulcan nerve pinch on a "human" who they take back to the ship. Voyager is hiding behind a moon, observing some sort of re-creation of Starfleet headquarters in the Delta Quadrant. The Doctor is able to trigger the human-looking alien, who has killed himself, to revert to its original form—species 8472! The crew speculate that 8472 must be practicing for an infiltration and takeover of Earth. Paranoia runs rampant, as Voyager prepares for war.

Braga and Menosky did a lot of rewriting on this script. Braga said, "The way we originally conceived that story, there was going to be a big space battle. We realized that this should not be a story about a space battle, it should be a story about discovering peace between two paranoid races who were thrust against each other by a common foe, the Borg. Suddenly it became a very STAR TREK-y episode. The hardest scene to write was the big briefing room scene at the end with Boothby, because there is not a single shot fired. You had to be satisfied that you had a climax, but it was a climax of diplomacy. I think it really worked."

Director David Livingston, who was a supervising

Ryan and Robert Picardo as the Doctor, calculating the odds on the ill-fated voyage home via the "slipstream" in fifth season's superb "Timeless."

said, 'Well, never, because she's not Starfleet, of course.' Then bam, I get a call from wardrobe two days later saying, 'We need you to come in for a fitting because you are in a Starfleet uniform for the next episode.' It was just because I was in disguise."

When asked how she likes her regular costume, Ryan laughed, "It's a corset underneath a really tight bodysuit, and four-inch heels, the same costume with the same fabric, just dyed different colors. I'm fine with it. I've always been fine with the costume. It's never bothered me, other than from a comfort level. Comfort is not the number one priority in the wardrobe department of STAR TREK."

Ryan's divorce from her husband made fifth season even more difficult. She has her four-year-old son with her, and her parents live nearby, making things a little easier. Ryan's father accompanied her when she received a Golden Satellite Award from the International Press Academy for playing Seven of Nine.

As the character faces a future in season six that may or may not include Voyager's return to the Alpha Quadrant, is she ready to go back to Earth if that happens? Answered Ryan, "I don't know that Seven would ever be ready, but I think she is more ready than she was a year ago, certainly, and she's curious now. She's still very apprehensive, but that wouldn't certainly be the end of the world I think now, for Seven. At the same time, which was my main concern, she has kept that Borg edge, and she is still the outsider, which I think is the allure of that character." □

STAR TREK VOYAGER

ROBERT PICARDO

The Emergency Medical Hologram on dating and the birth of the doctor's human soul fifth season.

By Anna Kaplan

STAR TREK: VOYAGER's holographic doctor, played by Robert Picardo, faced more than his share of ethical and moral dilemmas during the fifth season. Picardo, as usual, made sure the Doctor kept up his quotient of witticisms. But two episodes in particular, "Latent Image" and "Nothing Human," showed very different sides to the EMH.

"Latent Image" was Picardo's favorite. In the episode, the Doctor makes a triage decision that not only causes the death of a popular crew member, Ensign Jetal (Nancy Bell), but also forces his subroutines into disastrous conflict. Said Picardo, "I was proud of that show. I thought it was a great idea to have the Doctor's adaptive programming double-cross him, so to speak. In other words, he has personality subroutines and can develop a relationship and even feelings for a particular crew member that would influence a strictly objective medical decision. After he had made that decision, and the consequences had been suffered, that he would relive that moment of decision over and over again, and torture himself with the guilt of having saved one of two equally injured people because of a personal relationship, was a great concept for an episode. The more human he becomes, by definition, the less purely objectively he can practice his medical craft. Also he has to learn to reconcile tragedy, and feelings of guilt, or feelings of doubt about his choices."

He continued, "The episode was described to me by Joe Menosky as the birth of the Doctor's human soul, in having to deal with this problem and this conflict in his programming. "I think learning to cope with those inevitable feelings of helplessness in the face of human mortality is what strengthens and ultimately elevates the human soul, and arguably is the source of all



Picardo as Voyager's EMH with Robert Duncan McNeill as Paris in fifth season's "Someone To Watch Over Me," falling in love with Jeri Ryan, VOYAGER's "Barbie."

art. In trying to reconcile those feelings, people create art, which is why I loved the last scene."

In the final scene, Janeway is reading "La Vita Nuova," a book of poems written by Dante Alighieri 700 years ago. The Doctor starts to read from the book. Explained Picardo, "I think it had a very unusual ending for one of our episodes. The poem says something like, 'Here begins a new life.' I think it worked on two different levels. The poem was suggesting how, having had this experience, the rest of the Doctor's 'life' would be changed. The other level is that, I think that you could say that it's his true, first-hand, emotional discovery of art. That poem, which was written a thousand years ago, could reach across a millennium and touch his own experience deeply and perfectly. I was happy that the fans, the ones I have spoken to, seemed to accept the ambiguity. It was not wrapped up in a neat package by the end.

"It was all about discovering knowledge, but at whatever cost of pain and suffering on the live subjects." At the end of "Noth-

ing Human" Captain Janeway let the Doctor decide whether or not to delete the program and data files of the Cardassian doctor, Moset, who had gained his knowledge in an unethical way. Did Picardo agree with the Doctor's choice? He said, "Once the knowledge exists, is it not foolish not to use the knowledge to save lives? Did the Doctor make a mistake by deleting his program and all of its related subroutines and all of the knowledge that we could have gleaned from him to help us in future medical situations from Voyager's medical database? I don't know. [What] if the situation ever arose where we could have used some of Moset's discoveries to save someone on-board and I have deleted them out of moral principle? Once knowledge exists, does it even have a moral component? Knowledge itself has no morality. It's just the way people use it."

Despite the seriousness of "Latent Image" and "Nothing Human," Picardo's character provided humorous moments in scripts all through the season. "I'm still phoning Brannon quite often with potential joke lines, although my record is still 'Message in a Bottle.' I think I had six jokes that were mine, in that episode."

The memorable fifth season episode "Someone To Watch Over Me," in which the Doctor helps Seven learn socially appropriate, romantic behavior sparked some interesting observations from Picardo. "Ever since they put out our action figures, my daughters have been sitting them in the Barbie™ car, right next to these cute, young well-proportioned dolls in the driver's seat," he joked. "You've got this nice, middle-aged, bald guy riding shotgun with some very famous dolls. I like to think that my life here at work is starting to mimic my home life. If you have seen the Seven of Nine doll, she's very well-proportioned. She fits in Barbie's clothes. This was the great discovery my children made." □



Smiling for the camera, Chakotay and Boothby (Ray Walston) at Starfleet headquarters in "In The Flesh," a sinister simulation by species 8472.



The Challenger holds the Voyager's Delta Flyer in its tractor beam, taking the "slipstream" home in "Timeless," fifth season's special 100th episode, CGI by Foundation Imaging, supervised by Mitch Suskin.

producer as well as director during THE NEXT GENERATION years, recalled that Ray Walston first played Boothby in "The First Duty." Starfleet headquarters, as always was filmed at Tillman Water Reclamation Plant in the Sepulveda Basin.

Noted Livingston, "I thought Richard James did a wonderful job on designing the sets. I thought the bar and the apartment were spectacular sets, and I shot them with really wide-angle lenses so you can see them."

"A starship is no place for a child."

—Neelix

ONCE UPON A TIME

★★★

11/11/98. Production #199. Stardate not given. Written by Michael Taylor. Directed by John Kretchmer.

Naomi Wildman (Scarlett Pomers) is on the holodeck in a forest enjoying a 24th century fairy tale about the appropriately named Flotter (Wallace Langham) and Trevis (Justin Louis). Neelix, who is her godfather, calls her to bed. Her mother Samantha (Nancy Hower) is on an away mission with Paris and Tuvok. When she calls to say goodnight, she tells Neelix that the Delta Flyer has been hit by a severe ion storm.

Voyager loses contact with the Flyer. It has crashed through the surface of a bleak planetoid. Janeway allows Neelix to take the lead in taking care of Naomi. He wants to keep her distracted and tell her nothing. As Voyager tries to find the buried Delta Flyer, Neelix continues to keep Naomi busy with schoolwork and holodeck play, but she is soon asking specific questions about her mother. Neelix lies to protect her.

This was a surprisingly strong episode because of wonderful performances by both Ethan Phillips and Scarlett Pomers, Naomi's interaction with Seven in the mess hall, and the memorable fairy tale scenes. This was an episode that some viewers enjoyed more

continued on page 35

Scarlett Pomers as Naomi Wildman in her holodeck fairy tale forest with Flotter (Wallace Langham) in "Once Upon A Time."



that a lot of the VOYAGER cast think it's going to be one of the best of the season."

STAR TREK: VOYAGER's fifth season, driven by the vision and energy of Brannon Braga and his staff, delivered a group of exciting and diverse adventures to the television screen. The on-screen drama matched the off-screen frenzy, as cast and crew worked to bring the best

scripts, performances, and visual effects possible to the audience. No options were left unexplored as scripts were rewritten, scenes added, and post-production changes made. While there was the occasional misstep, for the most part this meant that every episode during VOYAGER's fifth season brought at least something of interest to the viewer. Many shows did far more than that, packing powerful visual and emotional punches. While the Nielsen Ratings jumped up and down, VOYAGER consistently ranked the highest of the UPN's prime time television shows.

Braga noted, "We started experimenting with a larger canvas, treating the episodes like little movies. I personally tried, with every episode, to pretend like I'm sitting down, not to rush out an episode of television, but to write a little motion picture, on a much smaller scale, of course, budgetarily. How can I make sure that the opening moment and images resonate with what the show is about? What are the first lines of dialogue? They've got to be snappy. If this were a VOYAGER movie, you would make

“We started experimenting with a larger canvas, treating episodes like little movies. Can I make sure the opening lines resonate with what the show's about?”

—Exec. Prod. Brannon Braga—

sure that every moment was special.”

Braga continued, "I have worked intensely on every single episode, and tried to bring something special to every single episode. Episodes we weren't entirely happy with, we went back and reshot. We would add material. I tried to treat each episode like a little jewel. There are a couple that just didn't work, but I think, in all

the years I have worked on this franchise, this has been my favorite season.”

After VOYAGER's fourth season, Jeri Taylor stepped away from the executive producer's chair to take the role of "creative consultant" much as co-creator Michael Piller had done previously. Braga knew this well in advance, using the fourth season to prepare for his turn as executive producer. Under the supervision and guidance of Rick Berman, Braga assumed responsibility for making VOYAGER run on a day-to-day basis. Said Braga, "To be quite frank, I took a much more active role in rewriting scripts, which is something that had not been done for a long time. I just felt a great responsibility to make sure every word was as good as it could be. I got involved with each and every single scene in every script. I can only hope that I brought the production team some exciting challenges, and they certainly rose to the occasion. I'm always trying to push the boundaries of not just the storytelling but of the way the show is produced. I think, hopefully, we turned out a decent season.”

continued on page 35

STAR TREK VOYAGER

DARK FRONTIER

Crafting stunning visual effects for VOYAGER's two-hour movie.

By Anna L. Kaplan

When the writer/producers of STAR TREK: VOYAGER were looking for a show to compete in fifth season's February rating sweeps, their attention turned to the Borg. After all, the Borg helped make the feature film FIRST CONTACT, co-written by executive producer Brannon Braga, a success. Not only that, but they had Seven of Nine on board the ship, and her story to explore. The results earned the series an Emmy for Best Visual Effects.

"Dark Frontier" which was aired as a two-hour "movie" by UPN, was written by Braga and Joe Menosky. "We were heading into sweeps," said Menosky. "Because of the success of airing 'The Killing Game' in a single night [fourth season] the network and the studio were really interested in doing a VOYAGER movie, a two-part episode that was aired on a single evening. But we had no idea what we were going to do. Brannon wrote this amazingly complete story memo that had everything."

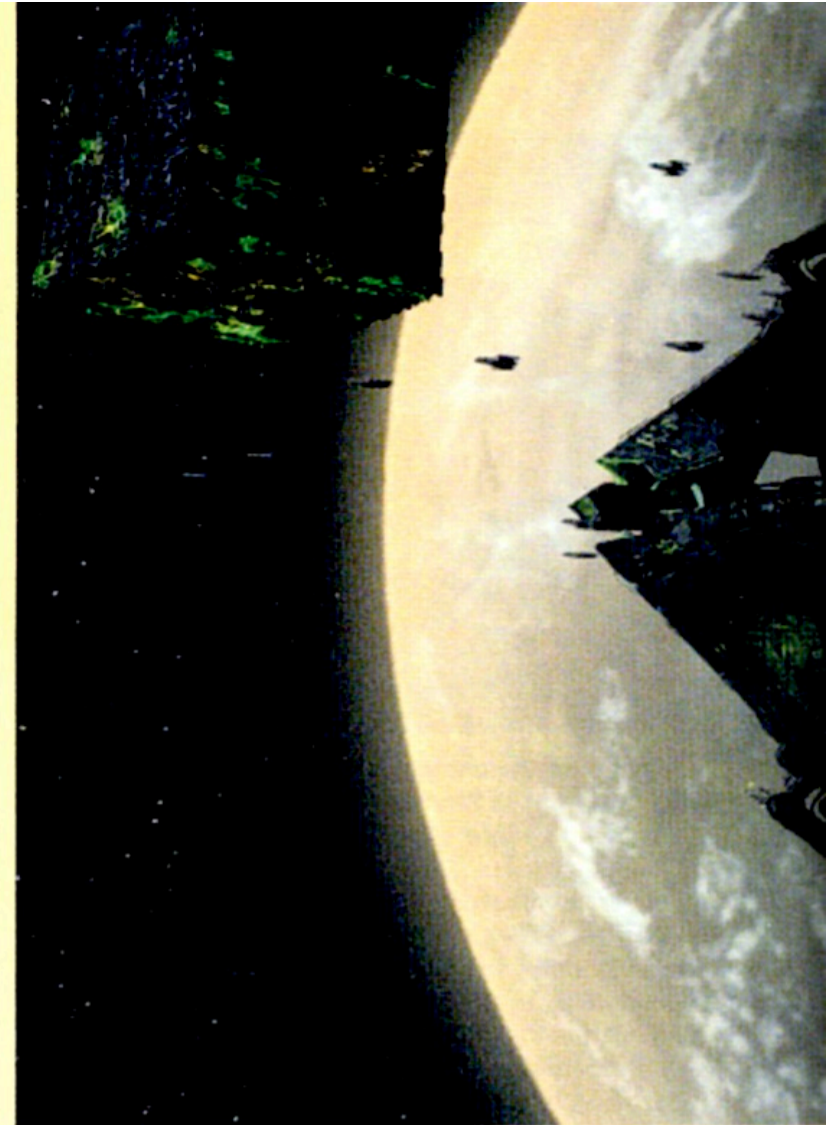
Braga recalled, "I really felt we needed something spectacular for February sweeps. One thing that I think has defined VOYAGER in the past couple of years are our big events, the two-parters. We had all these different storylines laying around having to do with the Borg. I just cobbled them together late one night and we had 'Dark Frontier.' To do a Borg movie, telefilm, or whatever you want to call it, we had to outdo FIRST CONTACT. The space battles and the Queen had to be more elaborate."

It was rumored early on that Alice Krige would reprise the Borg Queen from FIRST CONTACT. Didn't the Queen die at the end of the film? Said Braga, "I think they have a genetic tem-

plate for her. If destroyed, they bring it out and create another one." This Borg Queen was played by talented actress Susanna Thompson. Although new to VOYAGER, Thompson was no stranger to STAR TREK, having appeared in two episodes of THE NEXT GENERATION. She is probably best known to TREK fans as Dr. Lenara Kahn, from DEEP SPACE NINE's fourth season episode "Rejoined" in which she shared a passionate kiss with Jadzia Dax (Terry Farrell). Thompson explained, "I'm not the same Borg Queen. She's the new Queen of the hive. There are similarities, but we are different."

Thompson withstood many long days of work, starting with five-and-a-half hours to put on her makeup, as well as Krige's costume. She recalled, "It was all that STAR TREK can be, this great, big, theater side of it, with costumes and makeup. That particular costume is Alice's costume. They adjusted it for me. Our body types were similar, but it wasn't quite made to fit my body. Because of that, it wasn't the most comfortable after a 21-hour day. It's like a very, very tight wetsuit. I had to have two costume people work with me just to get the

Voyager comes under attack by a Borg probe in the teaser. The show's striking CGI effects were supervised at Foundation Imaging by Rob Bonchune.



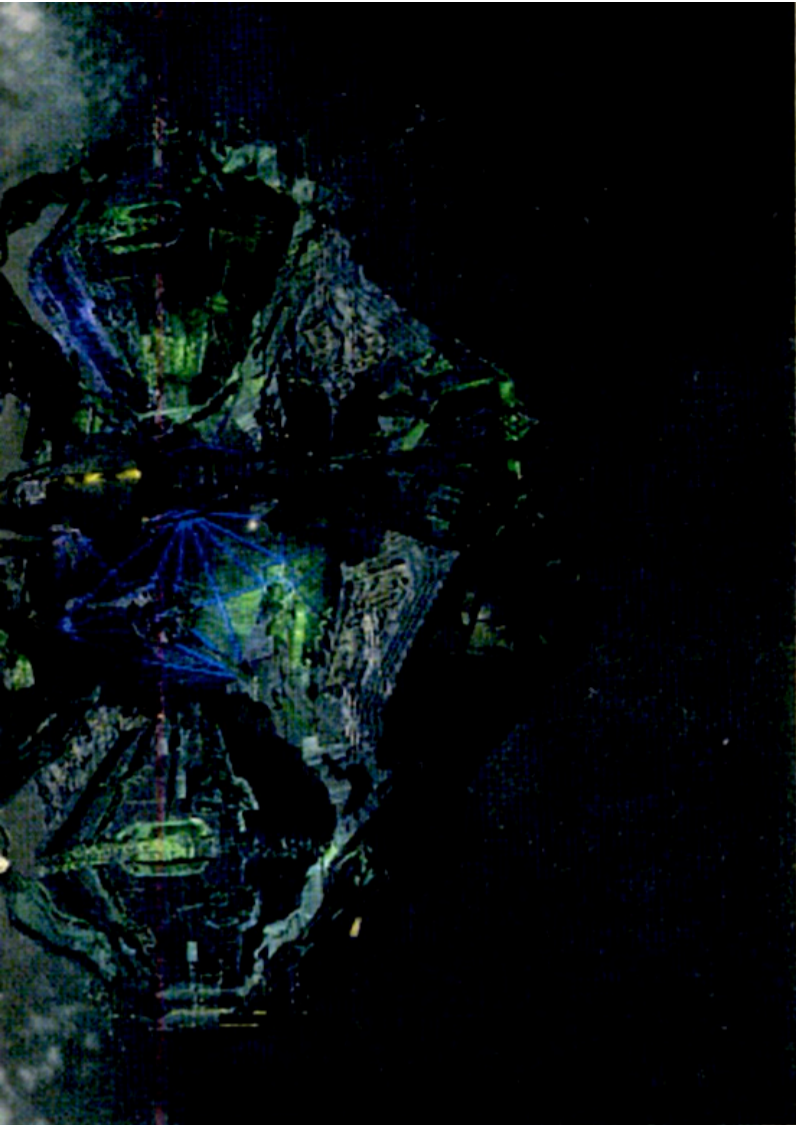
Above: A Borg cube and the Queen's Ship, a new design. season two-parter, aired during the February sweeps as

costume in place and ready to shoot. After long days like that, and always having to count on somebody else to help you through things, I was tired of it."

The job of getting the Borg Queen's head and neck into a body, as well as all the other remarkable visual effects, was a complex one. Under visual effects producer Dan Curry, supervisor Mitch Suskin and coordinator Arthur Codron tackled the first part of the telefilm which was directed by Cliff Bole. Ronald B. Moore and coordinator Liz Castro handled the second part, which was directed by Terry Windell. The CG images for both hours were done by Foundation Imaging. Rob Bonchune and Mojo were the visual effects supervisors for Foundation, John Teska, the director of animation.

Mitch Suskin recalled, "The big challenges in that show, as far as I am concerned, were the Borg city, the unicomplex, and the scene where we got to the end of our script and it said, 'And then the Borg Queen arrives in a spectacular visual effect.'" Suskin laughed, "They wanted it to be impressive. We all secretly wanted it to be at least as good as what was done on the feature. We wanted to be a little bit different."

In "Dark Frontier" the Queen's head and neck descend in an elevator, and pieces of a body assemble themselves for her to connect to. Curry story-boarded the effect, which was done CGI by John Teska of Foundation Imaging because the elevator built on set was non-functional. "We shot a plate of the actress, the Borg Queen, a closeup that they



Right: The Borg Unicomplex, a Borg city in space, effects on a TV budget and schedule that matched the quality of the Trek feature *FIRST CONTACT*. The effects for the fifth ratings-winning movie, earned an Emmy for effects producer Dan Curry, supervisors Mitch Suskin and Ronald B. Moore, and coordinators Arthur Codron and Liz Castro.

tracked in," said Suskin. "She's just standing on the stage in front of a bluescreen, but we actually had the camera tilting, and coming down, so we'd have a little bit of a perspective change. It was tracked in and composited at Foundation Imaging. The shot where the little hooks latch into the Queen was just a production shot of her. Everything that latches in was done at Foundation. For something that we had no right to expect, time and budget-wise, that we would be able to bring off, it came together."

Noted Foundation supervisor Rob Bonchune, "I remember when John did the first test of the mechanism coming out of the floor. It looked real. It looked like it was inside the shot. It fooled people into thinking it was actually done on set. John did a good job lighting it and making it look real."

Building the Borg ships, and the Borg city-in-space called the unicomplex, with CGI proved challenging as well. Said Suskin, "We had the feature, to some degree, to refer back to, to make sure that this appears to be in the same universe. We started the unicomplex with some building blocks that Dan Curry laid out, which were literally built out of two blocks of wood and some Tinker Toys in his garage. The real thing, putting it in Borg space, making it look big enough, making it have enough detail, and rendering it, was nightmarish."

There were a number of new Borg ships in "Dark Frontier." One was the probe ship that Voyager blew up at the beginning. Recalled Suskin, "We looked at a lot of different shapes. The version which was picked was somewhat bar-of-soap shaped. Once you put Borg things on it, it worked, and you understood it was Borg, but different."

The photon torpedo that blows up the Borg probe was initially dropped from the

script for budgetary reasons. Recalled Suskin, "But as they cut the show, they looked at it and said, 'We really want more action, more drama.' We found out about that as they were finishing second unit photography, so Art Codron ran over to the set and got the background plates.

"It was a true team effort. We had a Borg model at Foundation.

John Teska gave us a couple of variations of a Borg flying backwards, with interactive light passes. Then we took it into the bay, dug through our vast library of explosions, and pieced it together in an afternoon, between his animation, the elements we had, and a little bit of Harry work here and there to stitch it all together. It's the one shot in the film when you see an explosion ripping through and the Borg getting blown backwards. That is a CG Borg."

Foundation Imaging also had to come up with a useable ship for Seven of Nine's parents, the Hansens, a ship called the Raven, which was seen previously in an episode of the same name. Explained Teska, "It was really a matter of almost starting over from scratch," said Teska. "We had a basic framework. We did a render of that, sent that back to [senior illustrator] Rick Sternbach. He made some improvements, things he'd like to see refined on it, and that's what we ended up building from."

There were some spectacular shots of ships inside of Borg transwarp conduits. This was seen a little during the first hour, but more so during the second. Recalled

“We’re not willing to be rigid about continuity. It’s not that we don’t know what was established a decade ago. We ignore it when it suits our purpose.”

—Writer Joe Menosky—

Suskin, "The transwarp conduit is something that we had done several seasons ago, for the dinosaur show called 'Distant Origin.' We established the transwarp effect in that. We pulled out that reference, because we assumed since it was the same term, that we would use that again. Peter Lauritson and the other producers looked at it and wanted something flashier. The

thing that they actually liked was from 'Hope and Fear,' the slipstream. What we did was basically take the slipstream effect and change the color a little bit."

Also introduced was the Queen's ship, another completely new design. Bonchune noted, "That was built by Brendon McDougall, with Dan [Curry]. That's totally different, too. It's not like any Borg ship we have ever seen."

All the effects were carried from the first part of "Dark Frontier" into the second part, as Ron Moore took over supervising. Noted Moore, "We did all of the Queen interiors, and a lot of the ships, exploding the Queen's ship and going through the Borg city, the unicomplex. Foundation did some great work. I think the quality of the images we got was really terrific."

The most spectacular sequence toward the end of "Dark Frontier" shows the Queen's ship attacking the Delta Flyer while inside a transwarp conduit. After the Flyer clears the conduit, Voyager blows it up with photon torpedoes. Recalled Moore, "That was stuff that executive producer Rick Berman added late.



Susanna Thompson as the new Borg Queen, outfitted with the suit and makeup Alice Krige wore in the TNG feature film *FIRST CONTACT*.

A lot of times we go into production meetings, and the prices start to go up. So we simplify. At the end when Berman was making the final cut, he put some of those [shots] back, the interior of the warp conduit, the firing, and the chasing, which I thought was fabulous. Just before finalizing the cut, he felt that we needed the shots, so we put them back in, in a rush, because at that point we are usually talking about having another two weeks to work. The thing that is really cool about something like that, even a show as complex as the Borg, is that we have such a team going, that people can pull together and deliver. The people like Foundation, when we get into a pinch they can come through, even on something that's late. They pull it out. It happens almost daily."

The top-notch visual effects of "Dark Frontier" in no way overshadowed the story, its complex plot jumping back from present to past, following the Hansens as they watched the Borg, Voyager as it fought the Borg, and Janeway as she tried to save Seven.

Her parents, the Hansens, were particularly fascinating. Menosky described the inspiration for the risk-taking Hansens, as the story of gorilla expert Dian Fossey, told in the book *Gorillas*

in the *Mist* by Farley Mowat. But if the Hansens were the first to discover the Borg, then why didn't Picard know about them in their debut second season NEXT GENERATION episode "Q Who?" Menosky said emphatically, "We are perfectly aware of what we are doing. There was no way in the world we were going to get rid of the Hansen arc, just because it didn't match exactly what had happened when Q first threw the Enterprise near that Borg cube."

One could speculate that Guinan (Whoopi Goldberg) or one of the other El-Aurians rescued by the Enterprise-B from the Borg during the course of the feature film *GENERATIONS* might have told somebody. Commented Menosky, "But you still have to cover, why didn't Picard know about it? There should be some mention in a database somewhere, and Picard should have known. There was a little bit of that knowledge, and Guinan's people are very secretive. In our minds, the Borg were a very slender rumor, and the Hansens followed up on the rumor and just disappeared. Whether that completely holds water or not, that's all the justification we needed to go with the Hansen arc. Even if we couldn't have come up with that justification, we would have done it anyway. I think you are denying new audiences the chance to see this arc that couldn't be told if you were going to be faithful to something that was established a decade ago. We are not willing to be that rigid about continuity. It's not that we don't know these things. It's just that we choose to ignore them when it suits our purposes. We know what we are doing when we dismiss continuity. You can't accuse us of ignorance. You can accuse us of arrogance, but that is about as far as it goes."

Menosky added, "The thing I liked the most about the episode shows how cool a

“Janeway and Seven of Nine will always be in conflict. But they became a little more like Picard and Data than they'd ever been in 'Dark Frontier.'”

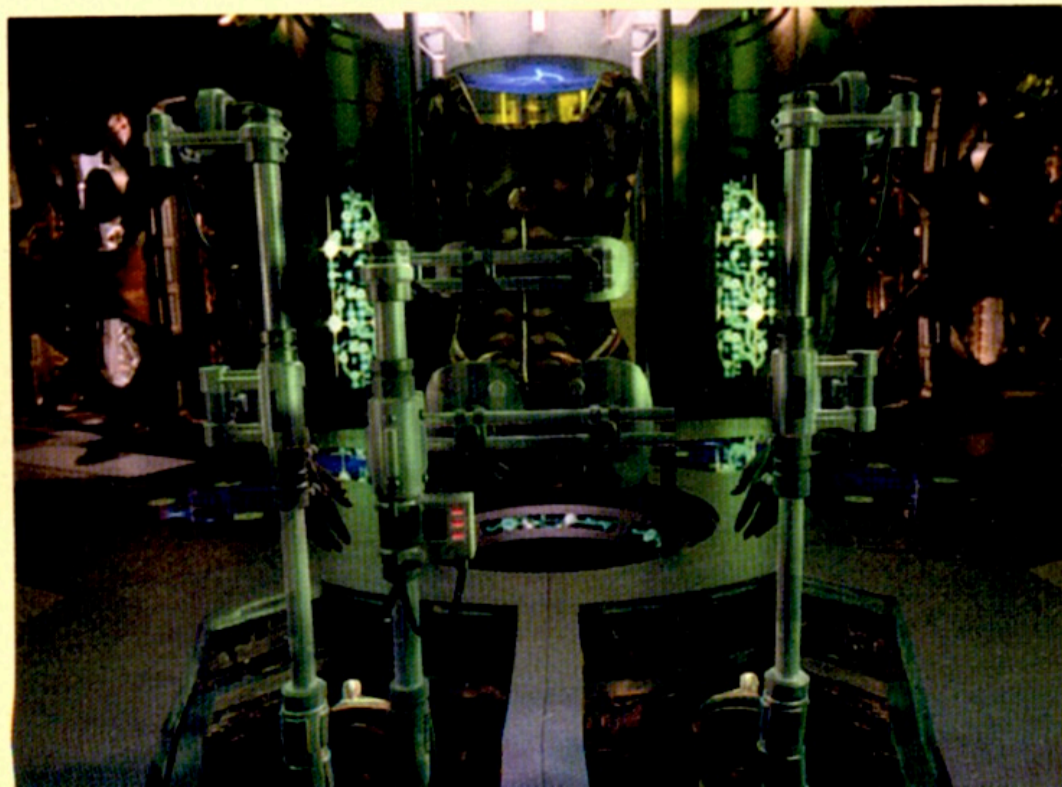
—Exec. prod. Brannon Braga—

home. I love the image when Janeway takes off, because she has no choice, from that Borg sphere and Seven is there amongst the Borg. I think it's a really powerful image, and goes to the heart of her character."

Braga picked some of his favorite moments. He said, "The best scene of the picture, I thought, was when the Queen was finally pushing her to the edge, pulling out all the stops, and finally just about to get her to crack, and Janeway's voice comes in. That was the best moment in the show, definitely. The scenes between Seven and the Queen I really liked. Seven is a smart cookie. It was fun to write the banter between her and the Borg Queen. I think that show 'Dark Frontier' was as important a show for Captain Janeway as it was for Seven. I think Janeway became more heroic and more human herself. Seeing Janeway in the little scene with Naomi, that was another one of my favorite scenes. Seeing people come to the Captain somehow felt right in that show. The scene with Naomi made her a little warmer, a little more human. I think her relationship with Seven changed in that show, inexorably in some ways. They will always be in conflict, that's the nature of their mentor-pupil relationship. But I think they became a little more Picard and Data (Brent Spiner) than they ever had been in 'Dark Frontier,' and I think that was a step in the right direction."

UPN's hunches about running a two hour VOYAGER, this one in particular, proved correct. National Nielsen rankings indicated that some 7.43 million viewers watched "Dark Frontier." This was VOYAGER's highest rating since "The Year of Hell" aired in 1997. Braga concluded, "'Dark Frontier' was very difficult to produce, but the team really rose to the occasion, and it turned out great. It had more action than *FIRST CONTACT*. On a television budget, the fact that we in some ways imaginatively took *FIRST CONTACT* a step further is an impressive achievement, and I'm just really proud of that. We all enjoyed it very much." □

The episode's cleverly designed Borg Queen's construction process, the set of the Queen's lair combined with CGI construction gear both above and below.



than the writers. Noted scribe Michael Taylor, "The notion initially was much bolder. It was going to be real 'Alice in Wonderland,' with Neelix and Naomi in this make-believe world for almost the entire show. It's a quiet little story, about a guy who is trying to protect a kid from very harsh realities of life that he experienced as a child, when he was younger. He finds out you just can't do that."

Menosky explained, "Brannon wanted to do the entire thing in a holodeck fantasy. Voyager was going through a war outside that we only caught glimpses of. They were involved in the big wars in DEEP SPACE NINE, and Rick Berman just didn't want to see 'wars' on both STAR TREK series. He rejected that idea. We ended up concocting this half-baked shuttle crash. What Taylor was stuck with was not as good as it would have been if somehow we had done Brannon's original inspiration. We had very little time to do a second draft. Basically everybody jumped in with Mike. As a result of this gang writing fashion, Taylor's original vision and execution of the fairy tale in itself was lost. I think the episode suffered as a result. I think what's finally on the screen is not nearly as interesting as Mike's first draft."

Menosky added, "The Naomi-Seven scene was a real delight. Brannon came up with that idea for a scene, and then I wrote it. It's one of the nicest scenes I've ever written."

Said Braga, "The scene with Naomi and Seven in the mess hall was so charming that we would end up exploring that relationship for episodes to come. Naomi Wildman turned out to be a real treasure this year. Scarlett Pomers is a terrific young actress. We got great feedback from parents and teachers, who said they very much enjoyed the way children's stories were represented as learning experiences."



Garrett Wang gives an outstanding performance as a grief-ridden Ensign Kim, determined to change history and save Voyager in "Timeless."

"This timeline only exists because I made a mistake 15 years ago. The crew trusted me, and I let them down."
—Harry Kim

TIMELESS

★★★★

11/18/98. Stardate 52143.6. Production #201. Teleplay by Brannon Braga and Joe Menosky. Story by Rick Berman, Brannon Braga and Joe Menosky. Directed by LeVar Burton.

A startling image of a frozen wasteland appears. Two unidentifiable people transport onto the ice and snow. As the camera pulls back, an image of the Voyager under a glacier is revealed. The two, Harry and Chakotay, both visibly grey and older, transport onto Voyager. Each looks around the ship, finding dead, frozen bodies. They retrieve two items, Seven of Nine's body and the Doctor, who had no idea what has happened.

As the episode progresses, past and present are interwoven. The crew of Voyager used the slipstream technology from "Hope and Fear" to try and get to the Alpha Quadrant, but the slipstream was unstable. Harry's plan to run ahead of Voyager in the Delta Flyer with Chakotay and send back course corrections did not work. The Flyer made it back to Earth, but Voyager crashed into the frozen planet. Harry explains this to the reactivated Doctor.



Captain Janeway (Kate Mulgrew) plays the part of Queen Arachnia, with Martin Rayner as Dr. Chaotica in fifth season's "Bride of Chaotica," the further adventures of Tom Paris' "Adventures of Captain Proton."



He continued, "I don't want anything filmed that isn't as good as it could be, given the circumstances. I have a lot more gray hair now. It's a lot of stress, a lot of work, a lot of brain energy. It's a very, very difficult job, but it's also very gratifying too. It's agonizing fun, is how I put it. It's exquisite agony."

Not only Braga, but also supervising producers Joe Menosky and Ken Biller found themselves doing a lot of script rewriting. The rewriting was often because of Braga's quest for the best finished product possible. It was also due to the fact that three new writers joined the staff, Nick Sagan, Bryan Fuller, and Michael Taylor. Supervising producer Menosky, Braga's writing partner, explained some of the main differences working on season five. "Brannon took over completely, not just story development but also scheduling. Jeri Taylor or Mike Piller were more concerned with having things run very smoothly, and also had certain kinds of organizational skills and personality bents that made meetings and production deadlines happen in a very clockwork, very calendar-oriented fashion. Brannon is just not like that at all. Brannon wants to be involved in everything."

"What I think is to Brannon's credit, even though it almost killed him and it almost killed us, is that he never let a script go, ever, if he thought it had problems. That doesn't mean that these scripts were perfect, but I do think the quality of the scripts was just a little higher this year and just a little more consistent. We readily admit to a few turkeys, but, that's always been true. I think we kept it to a minimum. Even the episodes that did not entirely work, I think there were little elements of them that are

nice, moments that made [each] a worthwhile episode at least, so it wasn't a complete loss."

Veteran director David Livingston echoed Menosky's statements. He said, "Brannon stayed in the trenches with all of the scripts. He wanted them to be as good as possible. He would keep apologizing to me. I would say, 'Brannon, take all the time you want. I don't care if you deliver the pages to me down on the stage right before I am going to shoot them, as long as the scripts keep getting better and better.' And they did. I would get a first draft of the script, and Brannon would say, 'Don't worry, we are going to get it together and it is going to be great.' Indeed on every show, that is what happened. He would stay there and keep rewriting, and have everybody else on the staff rewriting until the script was where it really should be. And I think he kicked the show up another notch because of that."

Livingston continued, "I did seven episodes, and every episode was short in terms of air time. So I had to go back and shoot one and sometimes two additional days on the episodes in order to make air-time. That presents a directorial challenge. But it is a heady experience to get pages at the last minute, and have to think a lot on your feet. That's fun to do. You don't want to do it every single day, but it's a challenge. It's like climbing a mountain."

Episodes came in short all of season five. This added to the sense of frenzy and confusion. Menosky explained, "Brannon changed the actual pacing of the show. Driven by Brannon's desire for a much higher action component, which means less dialogue in scenes, much shorter scenes, and

continued on page 38

STAR TREK VOYAGER

ROXANN DAWSON

New mom B'Elanna Torres on reintegrating her half-Klingon science officer back into the ensemble.

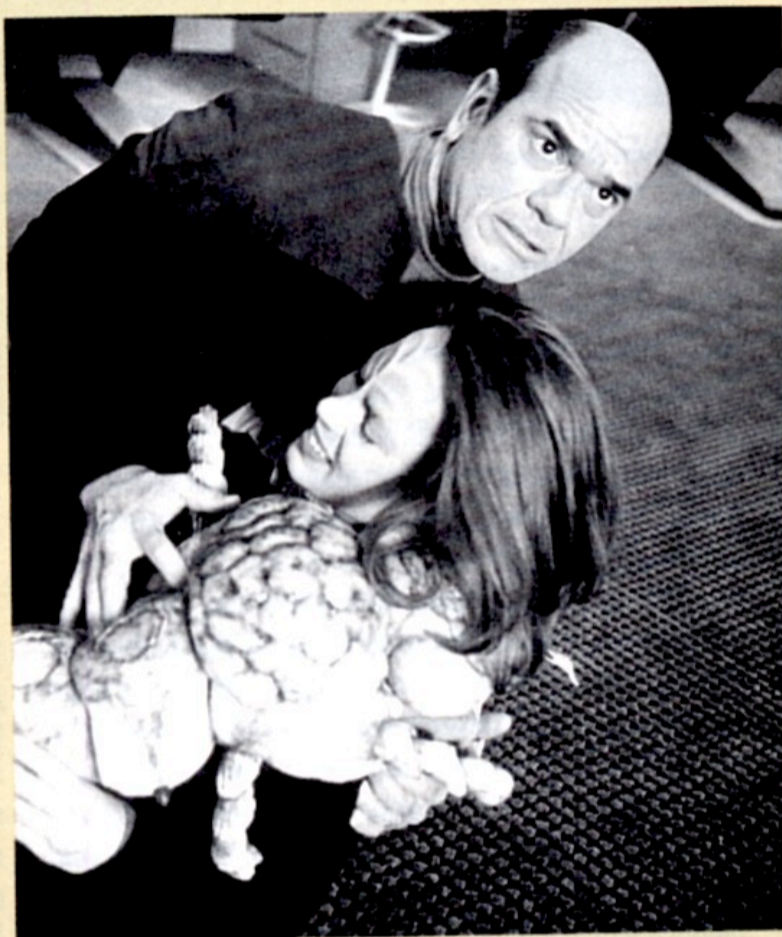
By Anna Kaplan

New mom Roxann Dawson finished a blissful year of motherhood fifth season during a time when her character, B'Elanna Torres, confronted depression, self-injury, and anger on STAR TREK: VOYAGER. Dawson was speaking from home while her young daughter Emma Rose Dawson cooed nearby. Said Dawson, "It's been the best year of my life, absolutely. We've been really lucky. According to everybody I've talked to, we've had it really easy because she is really good. So I have no complaints on that front."

Dawson, like the rest of the cast and crew of VOYAGER, felt like season five was a little crazy. She said, "It's been insane. You have probably gotten that feel from most of the people in our cast that you have talked to. It's been hard. I'm hoping that things will be a little more organized next year."

Before the start of the fifth season, Dawson had dinner with Brannon Braga and Ken Biller. Their conversation led to the idea behind the episode "Extreme Risk." Explained Dawson, "We were talking about the nature of depression. I had some ideas for B'Elanna about exploring that side of her. I started to elaborate on some of my ideas, and they were really interested. They said, 'We'll do something with that,' but I didn't expect to hear anything. Then all of a sudden this episode was handed to me. It was really great to see some of my ideas about B'Elanna's darker side explored by these writers."

Dawson continued, "I was pleased with the writing. It's always hard to explore a subject like that. I am never satisfied with my work, so I'll always find problems. I think for the most part it really did accurately explore a very difficult quality to put on film, without being trite and without being predictable. I think that they explored this



Robert Picardo comes to the aid of Torres in "Nothing Human," attacked by a giant rubber alien, her least favorite fifth season show. "I hated every minute," said Dawson.

self-destructive nature of hers in a really original way, and I appreciated that. It's also an area that STAR TREK doesn't deal with very much. I appreciated their risk, to quote the title, of going there, spending time in a show exploring just one aspect of an emotional nature that had nothing to do with science fiction."

During B'Elanna's struggle with her emotions, she pushes Tom Paris, with whom she is closest, away. Noted Dawson, "That was very true to nature, because often when we dissolve into those parts of ourselves, the ones that are closest are the ones that have the hardest time. They are the first people that you cut off. It seemed very right, his struggle to try and get through to me, and his inability to do so. I felt that it showed the relationship in a very real way, instead of an ideal way. What she was going through put tension into the rela-

tionship and caused an inability for them to communicate, and that was realistic."

It is Chakotay that forces B'Elanna to talk about her behavior, in a couple of very powerful scenes between the two characters. Recalled Dawson, "Those scenes were well-written. I felt that it also shed an interesting light on their relationship, which had not been addressed in a long time. It was nice to just touch on that again, get back to that, what brought them together. They have such a special relationship that is, I don't want to say father-daughter, because it isn't so much the age thing, but it's really mentor-student, and also like brother-sister. There is a real shared experience there, and for them to be able to explore that again was great. It's a nice relationship to pursue."

In contrast to Dawson's experience with "Extreme Risk" were her feelings about "Nothing Human," in which B'Elanna was attacked by a giant rubber alien. She laughed, "I hated every minute of that episode. It's no secret, so I can just blurt it out. That bug was just horrible. It was no fun. It's not like I was challenged in any kind of actor way. I was just laying there with a bug on me. It was a real pain. You had to have a sense of humor, though. I spent most of that episode just trying not to laugh at the whole thing. Granted, maybe the story had something to say, and I think that was the saving grace. I wasn't a part of a lot of those points. I think of myself more as a prop in that episode."

Dawson was very happy with "Juggernaut," which features B'Elanna and also brings back the Malon. Noted Dawson, "What's wonderful, and I think STAR TREK does very well, is when they take external plot devices that reflect internal struggles. This episode does that very well. It deals [with] forces of uncontrollable



Dawson as Voyager's science officer, raising newborn daughter Emma Rose while running Engineering and embarking on a writing career.

anger, both B'Elanna's internal uncontrollable anger and also with this beast that is inhabiting this Malon freighter. This beast that is loose has been very destructive, and is hurting and is acting out of a kind of a rage that very much reflects B'Elanna's internal rage, that she's having a hard time controlling. She is forced to face this rage inside of her, personified in this character. Their final confrontation is a real eye-opener. It's a really fascinating confrontation."

The final episode of season five, "Equinox," also brought something new for B'Elanna Torres. Said Dawson, "We actually run into an old beau of mine. It's interesting to see how that relationship is dealt with, especially in light of B'Elanna being with Paris now. That's an interesting conflict."

Dawson is a versatile performer who played Diana in A CHORUS LINE on Broadway. Her feature film credits include DARKMAN III and GUILTY BY SUSPICION. Dawson has written a stage play, and is working on a trilogy of science fiction novels. "My writing partner is Daniel Graham," she said. "We are in the middle of our second book for a trilogy that we have been working on for Simon and Schuster. They want to release both books at the same time. The first book ['Entering Tenebrea'] has been finished for quite awhile, but now they feel that it is commercially better to release the first two of this trilogy at the same time." □

Starfleet abandoned the search for Voyager, leaving Chakotay and Harry to try and find it on their own. When Starfleet acquired a Borg temporal transmitter, they decided to steal it and the Delta Flyer. Assisted by Chakotay's lover Tessa (Christine Hannos) they execute a plan to find Voyager, recover Seven's interplexing beacon with the Doctor's help, and use the transmitter to communicate with Seven in the past. A grief-ridden Harry is determined to change history. Captain La Forge (LeVar Burton) of the Galaxy-class Challenger tries to stop them from interfering with the timeline.

Braga called "Timeless" a perfect episode. (See "The Making of 'Timeless,'" page 40.)

"I helped to assimilate thousands of individuals, I do not remember each of their names."

—Seven of Nine

INFINITE REGRESS

★★★

11/25/98. Stardate 52356.2. Production #203. Teleplay by Robert Doherty. Story by Robert Doherty and Jimmy Diggs. Directed by David Livingston.

Seven exhibits strange behavior in the middle of the night. Later, she sees Naomi Wildman, and spends hours playing with her. After hearing voices, Seven starts to act like a Klingon male, biting B'Elanna and initiating a mating ritual. She becomes a little girl, and a Vulcan before turning back into a Klingon. Tuvok is forced to shoot her. Seven awakens in sickbay. She is hearing "too many voices." The Doctor says she is suffering from the Borg equivalent of a multiple personality disorder caused by proximity to the Borg vinculum, the central processing unit for the species collective mind. The only hope of reaching Seven is through a mind meld with Tuvok. In a stunning sequence of images, we see Tuvok wandering down distorted Borg corridors among screaming victims as he tries to find Seven. He is finally able to do so when B'Elanna shuts down the vinculum. Seven recovers, and has discovered a friendship with Naomi.

Billar said, "The original idea of the episode was that Seven met one person who was trying to pull out of Seven the personality of some loved one who had been assimilated by the Borg. That seemed a little far-fetched, that you could dig out one specific personality out of somebody who was a Borg that had assimilated millions of people. My contribution to that episode, other than guiding Rob Doherty through the writing of the script, was to say that this would be a lot more interesting if something weird happens to Seven. It does begin to set off a multiple personality disorder, and she begins to manifest all these different personalities that turn out to be the people that she assimilated. I thought that was great, a *tour de force* for Jeri Ryan."

Added Menosky, "Jimmy Diggs pitched a totally unrelated episode that had to do with finding a destroyed Borg ship. Jimmy came up with the vinculum, the central processing unit for the collective mind. Brannon wanted the vinculum, and

Tuvok chases down Seven of Nine in the twisted corridors of her Borg subconscious in "Infinite Regress," deftly directed by David Livingston.



it was going to be a maddening tech story, Brannon insisted. That vinculum ended up an albatross around his neck. Brannon paid the price for it, because he had to do a massive amount of rewriting. It was a very difficult script to get in shape."

Director Livingston said about the mind meld, "My favorite sequence that I have done for VOYAGER was the nightmare sequence that's inside her head. That's all done in the camera. The only visual effects are the pit where the Klingon falls into. Everything else we did with special lenses. We brought in a 'squishy lens.' We used a 'mesmerizer,' which is an anamorphic lens in the front of a regular lens. When you rotate it you get weird spherical effects. We also used this 'pebble lens,' that director of photography Marvin Rush had. We incorporated them all and came up with weird and dramatic effects. I thought that was a really cool sequence."



The dreaded "monster" show, Janeway, Paris and the Doctor try to save a dying alien, discovered on a damaged ship in "Nothing Human."

"Ethics are arbitrary."

—Crell Moset (David Clennon)

NOTHING HUMAN

★★1/2

12/2/88. Stardate unknown. Production #200. Written by Jeri Taylor. Directed by David Livingston.

The crew find a damaged ship, and a dying alien. The Doctor tries to treat the creature, which jumps through a forcefield, attaches itself to B'Elanna, taking over her body. The Doctor can't separate them. He and Harry Kim make a hologram based on a real exobiologist named Crell Moset, a Cardassian. His database contains the expertise needed to save B'Elanna. Moset is recognized by a Bajoran crewman named Tabor (Jad Mager), who says that Moset was a mass murderer who obtained his data by experimenting on Bajorans.

The ethical debate at the core of the episode about whether immorally acquired knowledge should be used was interesting and important. It did, however, make for a very talky episode. Director Livingston recalled, "It was about something, yet it was all talk. I said, 'We are just going to move the camera all the time.' I said to the actors, 'Don't ever stop moving.' I told them to make it a dance."

The least credible part of this episode was the rubber alien on top of B'Elanna. Said Livingston, "We had bladders put into it so it would look like it was moving, but you never wanted to stay on it long enough to see the bladder moving. It was this big, silly piece of rubber—one of those things you have on STAR TREK once in awhile. It's part of the genre."

"Hey Dad... Chances are you'll never receive this letter, but in case you do, there's a few things I wanted to say. First of all, bad news. I'm in jail again."

—Tom Paris

30 DAYS

★★1/2

12/9/98. Stardate 52179.4. Production #202. Teleplay by Kenneth Biller. Story by Scott Miller. Directed by Winrich Kolbe.

Janeway reduces Tom Paris to the rank of



Two grim figures search an icy plateau at the opening of fifth season's "Timeless," VOYAGER's very special 100th episode, scripted by Brannon Braga and Joe Menosky.

many more scenes, our scripts have gotten much, much longer. On THE NEXT GENERATION, our average script length was 55 pages, and that shoots at 43, 45 minutes of film. By mid-fifth season VOYAGER, the average script was something like 72 to 75 pages. With seven or eight days of shooting, we have ended up almost always short, by two minutes, three minutes, sometimes as much as nine minutes. I know that Brannon is not doing this on purpose, but it has this effect of turning seven day shows into eight day shows, and eight day shows into nine day shows. Because we are short, a couple of weeks later we will end up going back and shooting another day, or another half day. Production has had to rise to the challenge of this new direction, and try to find a way to shoot this extra material, and to work more quickly to do this without ever getting in situations where you have a complete production and scheduling breakdown. We've been close [fifth] season, but we've never actually come to that point."

What did the actors think about all this? Most were quick to point out that the high quality of the scripts made up for the production difficulties. For example, Ethan Phillips, who plays Neelix said, "The writers haven't been getting in the scripts on time, but I'd rather wait and have a script come late that is the caliber that these scripts have been, than have them on time, generic, and run of the mill. These scripts have really been worth waiting for. I feel that the show is just in top notch shape."

Jeri Ryan recalled, "I think everyone had a tough year this year. Episode-wise I think this was our best season yet by far. With Brannon Braga taking over, the writing has

“I’d rather wait and have the script come late that is the caliber these have been than have them on time and generic. These scripts have really been worth waiting for.”

—Ethan Phillips, Neelix—

just reached a new level of intelligence, and richness. The stories are grander in scope. At the same time there is still wonderful, wonderful character work in each episode. It has been an outstanding season."

Braga's touch could be seen virtually everywhere during VOYAGER's fifth season. His imagistic way of thinking about story ideas, and translating visual concepts into scripts was matched by the advances in computer generated imaging techniques. What the writing staff imagined, supervising producer Peter Lauritson and the visual effects department under visual effects producer Dan Curry and supervisors Ronald B. Moore and Mitch Suskin, delivered. VOYAGER brought to the television screen an enormous Borg unicomplex in space in "Dark Frontier," the ship Voyager crashing on a frozen planet and resting under meters of ice in "Timeless," a region of space in complete darkness in "Night," the magnificence and terrifying CG aliens of the season-ending cliffhanger "Equinox," not to mention countless space battles, alien ships of the week, portals, anomalies and nebulas.

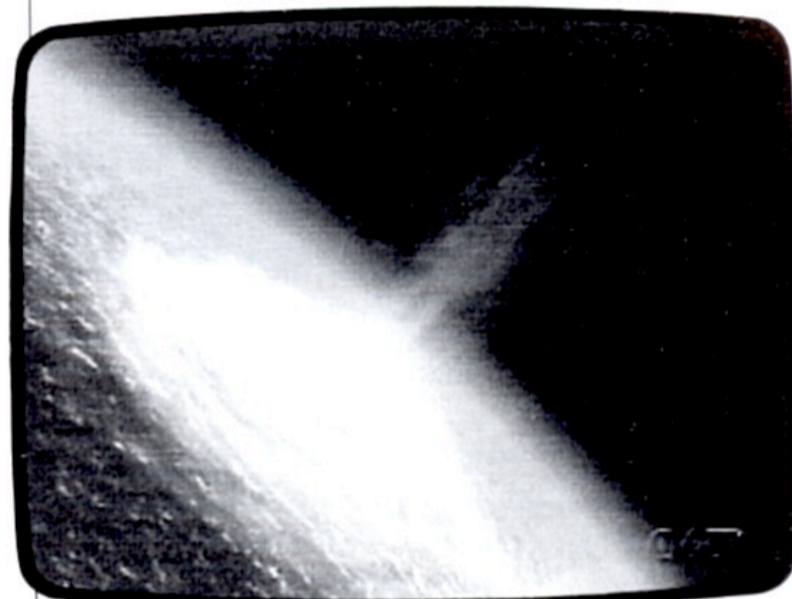
Noted Braga, "I'm looking at old reruns of THE NEXT GENERATION at midnight every night, and I am realizing, if we had even broached the subject of burying Voyager under the ice, in those days, they would have laughed. Or doing [‘Killing Game’ with] a World War II, exterior battle at night between Hirogen, Nazis, Starfleet and Klingons, they would have laughed. But for whatever reason, we are doing it. A lot of it has to do with the fact that we are working with a production team that has been together for 12 years, and the fact that VOYAGER has come into its own as a different show, with a broader vision. There does not seem to be any challenge that this team can't execute. 'Dark Frontier' was a good example. That was a huge show. It seemed to have more action than [the feature film] FIRST CONTACT."

During VOYAGER's entire run, Rick Berman provided continuity, inspiration, and much more. Said Braga, "We worked

continued on page 43

ensign and sends him to the brig for 30 days. While there, Tom dictates a letter to his father Admiral Paris, telling the story of his trouble in flashback. After a brief interlude with Harry and the Delaney sisters (finally seen, played by Alissa and Heidi Kramer) in the Captain Proton hologram, Tom goes to the bridge. Voyager has detected what appears to be an enormous ocean floating in space, held in place by a containment field. As Janeway attempts to investigate, starships come out of the ocean. The inhabitants of the world, who used to be nomadic explorers, found the ocean and made it their home 300 years ago. Once convinced the Voyager crew is simply curious, they agree to let some of the officers look around.

Noted scripter Ken Biller, "Scott Miller brought us this idea a couple of years ago of an ocean in space. Brannon and Joe and I fell in love with the image. Unfortunately, we never quite figured out the best way to tell a story about it. The show ended up being ten minutes short, so the whole subplot of Paris being in the brig and telling the story as a flashback was something we added after the episode was shot. That ended up being the most interesting thing. I thought the special effects were great and the ocean was intriguing."



Voyager discovers an ocean in space in "30 Days," named for Paris' flashback narration from the brig, an afterthought when the show ran short.

"Trust has to be earned. It's gradual... It's also a concept alien to the telepathic races."
Inspector Kashyk (Mark Harelik)

COUNTERPOINT ★★★1/2

12/16/98. Stardate unknown. Production #204. Written by Michael Taylor. Directed by Les Landau.

Inspectors from the Devore Imperium board Voyager. The crew is obviously accustomed to their searches. The lead inspector Kashyk takes over Janeway's office, while his assistant Prax (Patrick McCormack) combs the ship, checking everything for telepaths. As the Devore scour every corner, Kashyk pipes classical music through the com system. They leave after finding no telepaths, because Janeway has hidden them with an elaborate scheme involving the transporters. Not only are Tuvok and Vorik (Alexander Enberg) stashed away, but so is a group of alien telepaths hiding from the Devore. Janeway is trying to help them get to a wormhole which will take them out of Devore space.

Noted scripter Michael Taylor, "It's about time our Captain had a romance, and a romantic partner worthy of her. She can never really let her guard down. She's always got to be the captain. The show is sort of a romance within an elaborate game. She never loses site of the goal, which is to protect her crew and the people she has taken aboard. I think it was a great chance for Kate to show what she can do. She had been asking for some sort of romance, and when it came along, she saw that it was right for her character, and she played the role to the hilt."

STAR TREK VOYAGER

TIM RUSS

Resident Vulcan Tuvok on moving his career into film and music.

By Anna Kaplan

If it seems like Tuvok, played by Tim Russ, appeared onscreen less often during VOYAGER's fifth season, it's true. Russ spent a lot of time on other projects, but he enjoyed everything he and Tuvok did. For one thing, Russ was really itching to get to work on the Captain Proton set. During "Bride of Chaotica," Tuvok went in with Paris to find out what was wrong with the program. Said Russ, "I was hoping to get a chance to work on that set. I wouldn't normally be on it because it is his holodeck sequence. It was very nice to be able to go in for a minute, under the auspices of investigating what was going on that wasn't quite right about it, and be able to work on the set, and be able to see it back in black and white. I thought it was very cool. I really enjoyed having an opportunity to do that."

Tuvok had a chance to be funny in "Bride Of Chaotica." Laughed Russ, "Between the robot and Paris, there is a lot to play off of there, quite a bit actually. Paris has always been a perfect foil for this character. We had a lot of fun in 'Future's End I and II' which is the same kind of thing. Paris is so careless and so off-center. It works very well against Tuvok's straight and linear way of doing things. 'Chaotica' was a prime example, and the writers gave me several zingers to throw him."

The show that aired immediately after "Bride of Chaotica" was "Gravity," which featured Tuvok. The episode begins with a flashback to Tuvok's youth, at a time when he had to learn to suppress his dangerous Vulcan emotions. In Voyager's present, Tuvok, Paris and the Doctor have crash-landed on a desert planet and are marooned there for months, meeting up with an

alien woman named Noss (Lori Petty). Said Russ, "'Gravity' was a really big show. We had to go on location for two days. We rarely ever go on location, not more than maybe a couple of times a year. It was fabulous. We were out in Palmdale, in the high desert, and it was actually pleasant. Lori Petty is a very good actress, and did a fine job. Robert Duncan McNeill and I have worked together quite a bit in the last couple of years, and it's always a lot of fun, because we do a lot of cutting up."

Russ continued, "I thought it was shot well, and the opticals came together nicely. I was very happy with it. It was an enlightening episode for the character, a chance to peek back at his past, and see him as a child, see what he went through at that age and the kind of legacy that he left behind. It was a very eye-opening show."

Tuvok performed a mind meld with Noss at the end of "Gravity." He also melded with Seven to try and recover her personality in the episode "Infinite Regress." The sequence was directed by David Livingston and done in camera, using a variety of lenses. Recalled Russ, "That dream sequence was pretty amazing, some pretty remarkable stuff with the camera, so you get

Celebrating with Ethan Phillips as Neelix (l) and Roxann Dawson as Torres in "Timeless," preparing to head home using new "slipstream" technology.



Russ consults with Kate Mulgrew as Captain Janeway in "Infinite Regress," seeking a treatment for Seven of Nine's Borg multi-personality disorder.

the images and the feeling for being in that situation. That was a lot of work. That was a hard week actually. We were shooting on that stage some pretty long days."

Russ noted, "Particularly the last six or seven shows, I'm not very heavy in them at all, because I had other projects going on. I requested to be light in those shows, to get these other projects done. They accommodated me, very graciously so, and allowed me to have a little breathing space. I have a feature project I am trying to get out, and a couple of music projects."

Russ and partner Nate Thomas worked on a movie called EAST OF HOPE STREET, which won the award for Best Urban Drama Feature Film at the New York International Independent Film and Video Festival in 1998.

And Russ regularly plays guitar and sings in the Los Angeles area. Sometimes he sings at STAR TREK conventions. Said

the versatile performer, "I had a CD that I completed recently, called 'Only a Dream in Rio.' I usually sell it, take it to conventions. It's also on the STAR TREK website under my biography. I am currently working on a second one and a couple of live shows with another band."

Russ took a look back at the fifth season. "It's been a very interesting year, because of the variety of stories. The show is only designed to run for seven years. When it's done, who knows what then? I wonder about it myself sometimes." □

STAR TREK VOYAGER

THE MAKING OF "TIMELESS"

The cast and crew pulled together to make the show's 100th episode an exciting, bittersweet gem.

By Anna Kaplan

As was frequently the case during story development, executive producer Brannon Braga's first idea for VOYAGER's 100th episode was visual. Explained supervising producer and co-writer Joe Menosky, "The way Brannon tells stories, often he starts out with just an image and will figure out a story around it. In this case, it was Voyager buried under the ice."

It would be up to the visual effects team, under producer Dan Curry, visual effects supervisor Mitch Suskin and coordinator Arthur Codron to come up with this image. This was a difficult task, which was eventually accomplished by means of a digital matte painting made by Eric Chauvin. Recalled Suskin, "The biggest problem with that was a conceptual problem. The script said, 'They see Voyager under tens of meters of ice.' There is no way you'd see anything. If you have ever seen a glacier, there's no way you can see anything under a couple of meters of ice, let alone tens of meters. We talked to Brannon Braga about it, and Steve Burg did sketches of the problems inherent with seeing Voyager under the ice. If you see it under the ice, it starts to look more like water than ice. We did some concept art showing the Voyager halfway sticking out of the glacier, half covered up. We thought it was really dramatic. But the image that Braga really wanted to see was Voyager under the ice."

The vision of Voyager crashed on a frozen planet eventually turned into the story of "Timeless." Noted Menosky, "In some ways I think 'Timeless' captures perfectly the new style of VOYAGER. The entire teaser has almost no dialogue. Act One has almost no dialogue. When we were initially talking about it, we were trying to figure out a way to do it with no dialogue at all, and do the teaser and Act One absolutely silent,



LeVar Burton makes a cameo as Captain La Forge, a last minute idea by executive producer Brannon Braga who had called-in Burton to direct his time travel script.

which is pretty impossible to pull off. I think we did it as well as you could."

In "Timeless," story by Rick Berman, Brannon Braga, and Joe Menosky, teleplay by Braga and Menosky, Voyager has used the slipstream technology acquired from the alien in the previous season's "Hope and Fear" to return to the Alpha Quadrant. In the process, Voyager crashes on a frozen planet, coming to rest under the ice, where the crew members meet their demise, except for Kim and Chakotay in the Delta Flyer. "Timeless" begins 15 years in the future, as a tortured Kim, along with Chakotay, have hatched a plan to change the timeline and save Voyager.

Foundation Imaging did the computer graphics work on "Timeless" and many other VOYAGER episodes. Both Rob Bonchune, visual effects supervisor for Foundation, and John Teska, director of animation, worked on the show.

Noted Suskin, "We had approached the crash sequence with particle animation, with another group doing it first. They did a really good job, but in the end it didn't

come up to our standard. It just wasn't good enough. We decided to do the combination of CG crash, and actual filmed elements. To some degree, that challenge is what made it so much fun."

Writer Menosky raved about the crash sequence, saying, "My favorite moment of the year is almost like nothing. It's something we barely scripted, when Voyager plunges out of space, down through the atmosphere of this ice planet, and then does a belly flop on this glacier and crashes into the screen. When you script it's like half a page, nothing. You see what these guys did with that. I couldn't stop watching it. I probably watched that sequence 50 times. It was just like a nonstop, roller coaster rush for me."

Back to creating the story for the episode, Menosky said, "This is an interesting little bit of history. Back when we were on TNG fourth season, Rick Berman had basically said, 'No time travel stories.' He thought it was hokey, and he just didn't want to hear about it. Eventually, when you are doing hundreds of episodes, and you are running out of ideas, time travel and mucking about with time finally got opened, and we went with it. On VOYAGER finally we've run out of ways to tell a credible time travel story, because it's all been done. 'Timeless' is like a post-modern time travel story, because nobody is actually travelling through time. There's a message sent through time. The beats of a time travel story, the twists and turns are all so known that there is almost no way to do it with any degree of surprise. As a result, what I think made 'Timeless' work was the imagery, the Doctor up in the Delta Flyer holding Seven's [Jeri Ryan] skull, and the kind of mussed-up Kim. The mussed-up, tough, cynical Kim, things like this are the things that I think carried that episode."

Garrett Wang had been unhappy about the fact that Kim always seemed to miss



Thrown out of the slipstream in a last-ditch attempt to get back to the Delta Quadrant, Voyager crashes on an icy planet, CGI and baking soda effects supervised by Mitch Suskin, created by Foundation Imaging.

out on the big shows, like fourth season's two part "The Killing Game." Oddly enough, Wang's work in the two-parter led to the Harry Kim in "Timeless." Explained Menosky, "There is an interesting point that reveals the—I'd almost say—interactive and organic nature of doing work on a series. Basically, a year ago, Brannon and I were as down on Kim's character as any character. We love Garrett, but Kim just never did it for us. If someone would have said to me, 'The hundredth episode, next season, is going to feature Garrett and Ensign Kim,' I just would have laughed. It was just inconceivable.

"When we did 'The Killing Game,' who was the one character that didn't get to dress up in a World War II period costume, and have an adventure? It was Kim. We stuck his ass on the bridge, and we just didn't care. A really interesting thing happened. We ended up being short in that episode. Because all the World War II sets had been struck, and it was elaborate amounts of costume to do anything in the period anyway, we were stuck with a few minutes of scenes we had to write, and no one but Ensign Kim. Because he was messed up, because these guys had been smacking him around, and he was rebellious but he still had to knuckle under, we saw this other side of Kim. It was a tough side to him that we had never seen before, and we really liked. That takes everybody

“My favorite moment is something we barely scripted, when Voyager plunges through the atmosphere and belly flops on a glacier and crashes into the screen.”

—Writer Joe Menosky—

by surprise, no one more so than us. You see him in dailies, and you see him in the episode, and you go, 'That's cool.' In a funny way, the future Kim in 'Timeless' was directly inspired by the belted-around Kim and edgy Kim from 'The Killing Game.' In some ways, Garrett was the perfect person for that episode, and no other character could have been used in that way."

Wang discussed how he began to approach the older Harry, saying, "When I originally spoke with Brannon Braga about the episode, I said, 'What do you see out of the older Kim? Give me something from pop culture that will clue me in a little more.' He said, 'I see him as the character from the original LETHAL WEAPON, the character that Mel Gibson played, [who] doesn't care about what's going on, about his own life. He's kind of wacked out, that kind of character.' I see where he is coming from, but I just made sure that what I brought to the older Kim was somebody who had been completely focused, or obsessed really, with saving the crew, changing the timeline. Through the years [he] has carried this burden of guilt that he has not been able to shed, to the point that he resigned Starfleet. The guilt is mixed in with a lot of bitterness and just not very happy feelings. He's been a tortured man for quite some time."

Wang gave a lot of credit to LeVar Burton, who directed "Timeless," as well as reprising the character of Geordi La Forge from THE NEXT GENERATION. Wang



Devore defector Kashyk (Mark Harelik) and Janeway savor the wonders of the universe in "Counterpoint," a romance worthy of the Captain.

Noted Menosky, "The original 'love interest' was one of the people who were being victimized. We just turned it on its head. How much more interesting, if the 'romantic sparks' are between two enemies. It was one of those shows where you finish with the break and you just think, this is going to be great. This is where we found out what a good writer Taylor was."

"Two patients, equal chances of survival, and I chose the one I was closer to? I chose my friend?"

—The Doctor

LATENT IMAGE

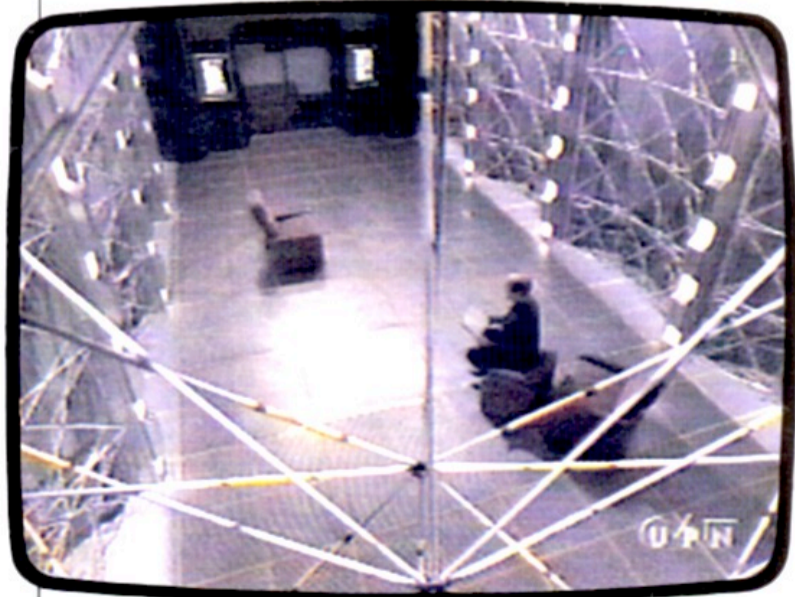
★★★

1/20/99. Production #206. Stardate unknown. Teleplay by Joe Menosky. Story by Eileen Connors, Brannon Braga, and Joe Menosky. Directed by Mike Vejar.

The Doctor is using his holomager during crew physicals. When he images Harry Kim, he finds evidence of neurosurgical procedure performed on Harry a year and a half ago. The technique was invented by the Doctor, but he has no memories of the event. Seven of Nine, who joined the crew after the time in question, helps the Doctor retrieve his lost memories. As files are reconstructed, it becomes clear that someone has tampered with his program. It is not an alien intruder who has reprogrammed the Doctor, but Captain Janeway, who, at Seven's urging, allows the Doctor to relive the events in question. As he re-experiences a triage decision, to save his friend Harry, the choice once again causes a feedback loop between his ethical and cognitive subroutines. He is forced to live the events over and over, which is why Janeway deleted his memory files. This time, Janeway makes a different decision, allowing the Doctor to work through the conflict, no matter how painful, or how long it takes.

Menosky explained that intern Eileen Connors came up with the idea for a show about the Doctor's holomager. Braga added the concept that

The doctor reads from Dante's La Vita Nuova at the conclusion of "Latent Image," as Janeway naps in her vigil to cure his mental breakdown.





Chakotay discovers Janeway frozen in the ice at the opening of "Timeless," going back in time to rescue Voyager from a catastrophic miscalculation.

said that he was able to do the difficult job of playing two Harry Kims, "with the help of LeVar Burton. I really like the way LeVar directs. He does his homework, which is the first thing that a director should do. Number two, he is very accommodating when it comes to thespian suggestions, and letting the actor do what the actor feels is natural or appropriate for the situation. Really, it's a collaborative process. Everybody has to have their two cents worth I think, and most definitely the actor, because the actor is the one who has to come up with the compelling performance. If the actor doesn't really believe in what he is doing, then it's hard to come across on screen."

Burton enjoyed working on "Timeless," crediting the writers for their work. He said, "Brannon had called me and asked me to do the 100th episode, and I said, 'I'd be happy to.' I knew they felt excited about it. I knew they felt there was an opportunity to see something special, but you never know. It all boils down to the script, and in the end, Brannon wrote an incredible script. I thought the first draft was pretty good, and then with every set of revisions, it just got better, and better, and better. I had a great time shooting it. I don't think it was any harder than a normal episode, necessarily. There were some really serious challenges, in terms of freezing some of the permanent sets, and

then having to turn them around in the same episode and shoot them normal. That was harder on the art department and set dressing than anybody else."

How did La Forge join the cast for the episode? Answered Burton, "That happened right before we started shooting. We had a draft, and then I got a call one Sunday afternoon from Brannon, who said, 'I'm just kicking around an idea, but before I start running with this, I want to know how you would feel about making a cameo appearance as Captain La Forge.' I laughed, and said, 'I don't know. You write it, and we'll talk.' It was fun. It was a nice little opportunity to put a spacesuit on."

In the future of "Timeless," La Forge captains Galaxy-type starship like the Enterprise-D. Bringing the CG version of the ship back to life was enjoyable for the visual effects team. Recalled Rob Bonchune, "It was fun because it just never happens on VOYAGER. You don't get to play with a lot of other Federation ships, because you are always in the Delta Quadrant. I think it was built by ILM for background stuff, then it was given to Digital Muse, and they gave it to us. There were deficiencies in the red glow in the front of the engine, in the Bussards [collectors], and the deflector dish was wrong. I guess far away in the background for a feature [GENERATIONS] it was fine, but we had the thing come right by camera. Everyone started to notice at Paramount that it didn't look like the models, so the modifications were made, and I think it ended up looking pretty good, like an actual photographic miniature."

Added Suskin, "We discovered that some of the models we had of the Galaxy-class ship needed detailing and coloring, which lead us to realize that some of the

“I like the way LeVar directs. He does his homework. He is accommodating when it comes to thespian suggestions and letting the actor do what's natural.”

—Garrett Wang, Kim—

books and references we were looking at were also incorrect.” Laughed Bonchune, “[Supervising producer] Peter Lauritson and Dan Curry had a lot of time to sit there and go, ‘Wrong, wrong, wrong.’ I’m glad they did that, because it gave me the chance to fix it.”

The people who worked on “Timeless” enjoyed it so much that they wished they could

have done more. Enthused Wang, “It could have been a feature. The way it was shot, and just the whole idea, it definitely could have been a feature. I was hoping that it was going to be a two-parter. They could have shown a lot of stuff that was left to exposition. Kim is talking about how they got medals, and Admiral MacIntyre wanted him to marry his daughter. All these little things that were spoken and not seen, you could have seen montages of that. You could have seen all kinds of things, really. They could have pumped that up into a two-parter, and I was ready to do it, too. Brannon’s comment on that was that he wanted the episode to stand alone, as if it was a ‘City on the Edge of Forever’ episode.”

Said Bonchune, “I almost wish it was [two parts]. I really thought they were going to film them stealing the shuttle in some sort of Federation dry-dock. That would have been nice, to actually go through with them on Earth stealing the whole thing, and getting away.”

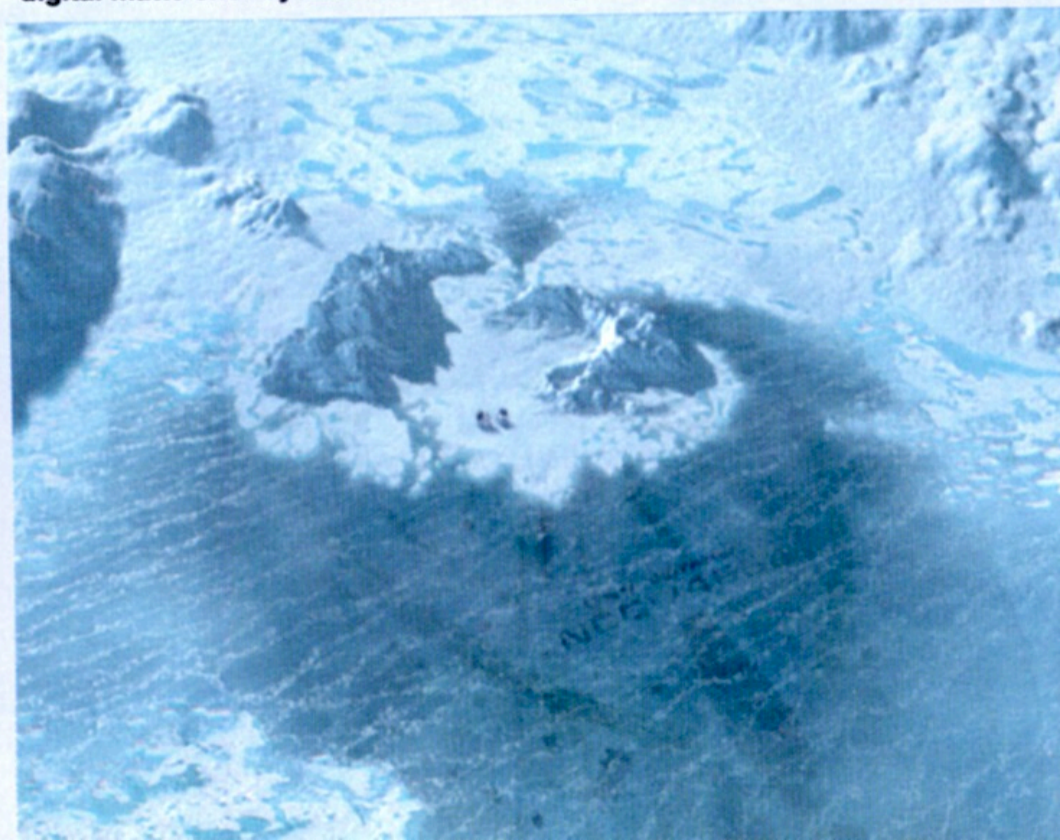
Everyone involved also agreed that “Timeless” was a wonderful episode. Suskin said it was one of his favorites. “‘Timeless’ was serious, had a great, well-balanced script, and the visual effects were very nicely integrated into the show.”

Menosky praised the acting, saying, “Garrett was great. I had a little tear in my eye at the end, and that was a very earned emotion. That little goodbye message from his future self was very interesting and evocative and emotional, without quite telling you what to think, which I think is a very cool thing to be able to do.”

Wang gave credit to the writers. “I thought the transitions joined the way that you got to see the original accident happening when it happened for the second time, how it skipped back and forth between present and past. I often tell people that the name of that episode, the way it was written at least, should be called ‘Seamless’ instead of ‘Timeless.’ To me it was definitely just seamless transitions.”

Braga himself said, “It was a perfect episode.” □

Chakotay and Kim find Voyager frozen beneath a glacier in "Timeless," a digital matte shot by Eric Chauvin that captured Brannon Braga's inspiration.



a "latent image" held the key to something in the Doctor's past. While writing the script, Menosky struggled with the end of the episode. He said, "There had to be some kind of dramatic resolution. Our proper climax would be that she allows this breakdown to occur, and sits in vigil with him until he goes through it. This last scene was one of the better scenes I have ever written. Everybody loved it but Brannon. He was really uncomfortable with it, so he just cut out a bunch of dialogue. He restructured certain things, [and] I think made it slightly less effective. In my version Janeway is holding this vigil, and because of her exhaustion, she just drifts off to sleep. He has something dark and sad and also moving to say. He looks up and she's asleep. He gets up, picks up the book and he reads a little, end of story. In the newer version, despite the fact that 90% of the dialogue is there, the structure of the scene was different. She ends up leaving, which in my mind is absolutely against the premise of the scene."

He continued, "I walked down to the set, and everybody was looking at me like somebody had just drowned my puppy. Kate Mulgrew said, 'That scene was perfection, perfection.' They were all very supportive. A few hours later, the director and the actors called Brannon and said they really wanted to do the original scene as it was written. Brannon relented and said, 'Go ahead and shoot both versions of the scene.' They shot the version as rewritten, and come around 1 or 2 AM, when it was time to set up for the next one, they just said, 'Let's just hope it works. Let's go home.' I didn't fault them for that. You can expect people to fight for you up and to a point. With 'Latent Image,' I just will never be satisfied with it because of that process."

This episode packed quite an emotional punch, with the Doctor reading from Dante's "La Vita Nuova" at the conclusion.

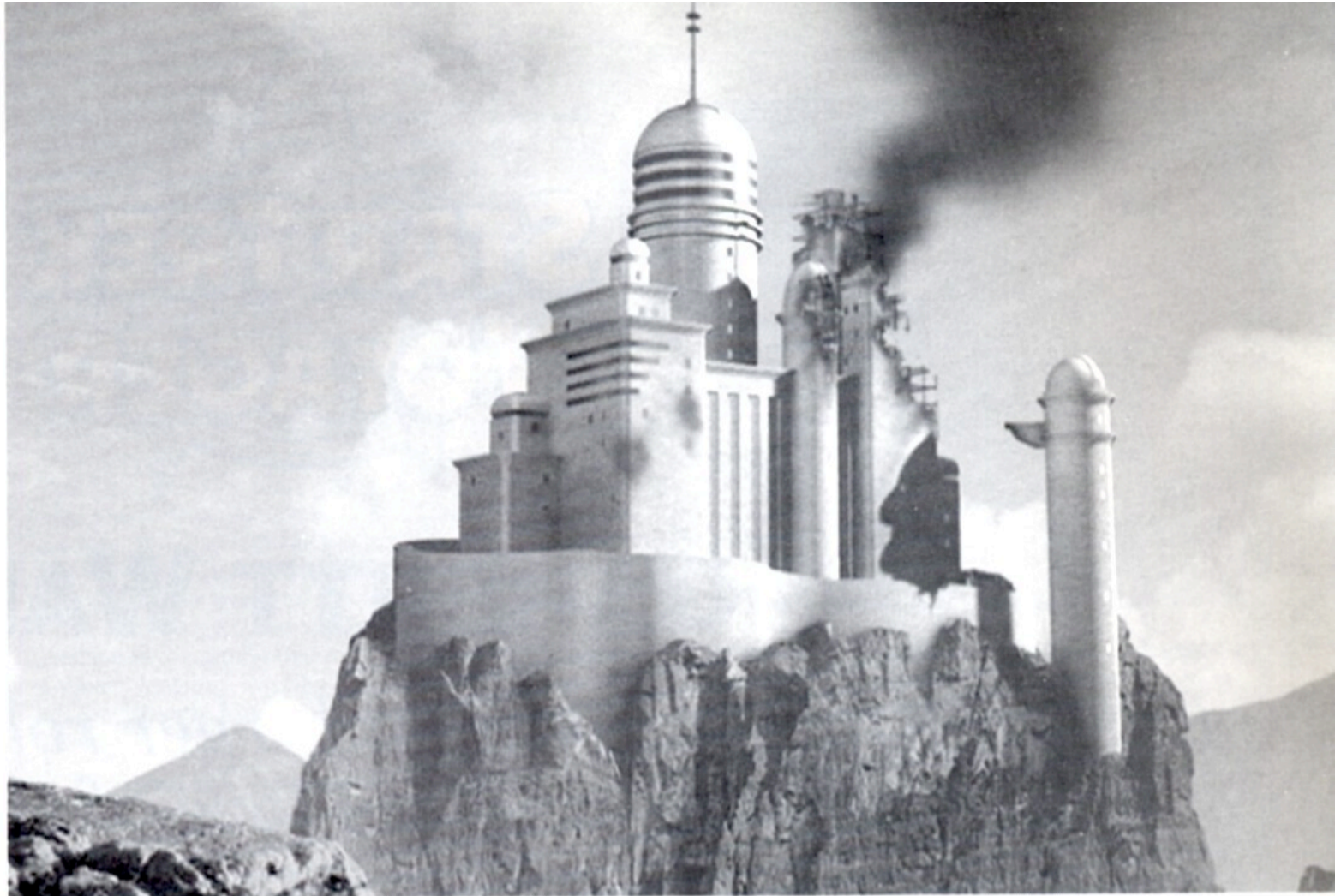
"We've only got 4 functioning lavatories for a ship of 150 people... If we don't get unstuck soon, we may have a serious problem on our hands, especially with the Bolians." —Neelix

BRIDE OF CHAOTICA ★★★1/2

1/27/99. Production number 207. Stardate not given. Teleplay by Bryan Fuller and Michael Taylor. Story by Bryan Fuller. Directed by Allan Kroeker.

The words, "The Adventures of Captain Proton," appear on a black and white screen. Tom, as Proton, and Harry Kim find their ship under attack by the nefarious Dr. Chaotica (Martin Rayner). When they land on Planet X, which looks amazingly like the mines of Mercury, and the Bronson caves, the planet starts to shake. Voyager has come to a dead stop, stuck in subspace. The holodeck controls are frozen. After Harry and Tom get out, and unbeknownst to them, two black and white aliens beam into the program through the expanding portals, and are captured by Chaotica's henchmen. From what Chaotica calls "the fifth dimension," these photonic beings

Photonic beings invade Paris' Captain Proton holodeck adventure in "Bride of Chaotica," an affectionately comic look at Trek's sci-fi roots.



Chaotica's smoldering castle in "Bride of Chaotica," a CGI matte shot by Foundation Imaging, supervised by Mitch Suskin, a black & white Holodeck romp in homage to the FLASH GORDON serials of the '30s.

very, very closely with Rick Berman throughout the year. In fact, he was much more than a producer. You'll see his name in the credits a lot in the writing department. He was very involved creatively this year, much more so than he had been in previous years, I feel."

Added Menosky emphatically, "Rick Berman is involved in every step of the storytelling process. Every story memo, every story, every draft, every line has to go by Rick. He doesn't just edit and cut things out, even though he may well throw out an entire scene or an entire script or entire story, but it's more than that. He adds huge, important story elements that I think people are not usually aware of. You will see his story credit often, for example on episodes like 'Timeless,' and that's because there are many times when he is even more than just key to the story. He originates a big part of the story."

The credit for VOYAGER's successes this season goes not just to Braga and the writing staff, or to the actors, or to the visual effects teams, or to Rick Berman, but also to the countless individuals working in pre-production, production, and post-production. Many, like supervising producer Peter Lauritson and makeup wizard Michael Westmore work not only on VOYAGER and the final season of DEEP SPACE NINE, but also put in months on the movie STAR TREK: INSURRECTION.

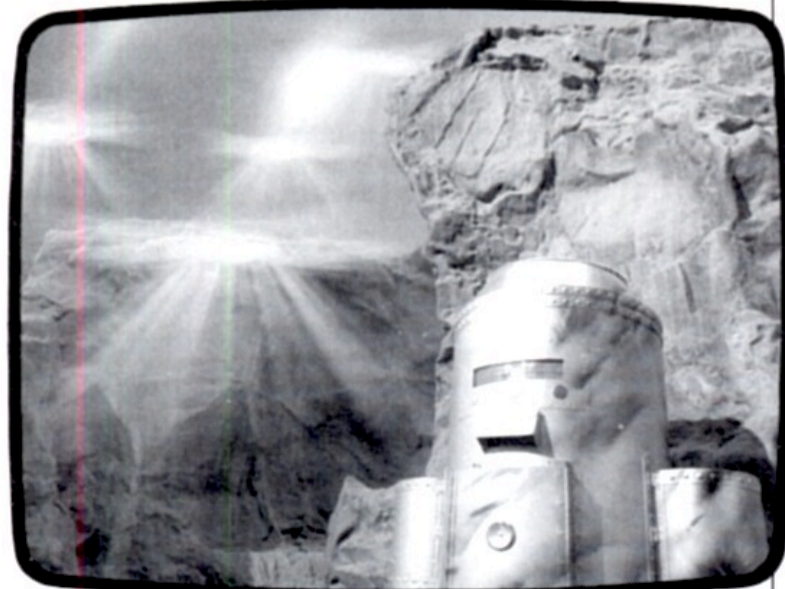
VOYAGER stumbled a bit into the fifth season with the opening episode called "Night." Braga explained the thinking behind this episode and the beginning of the season. "One of the things we knew we wanted to do was to visit every character. It was time to see how the four years lost in the Delta Quadrant were affecting people. If you look at the season, you will see that we hit all nine characters, to get under their

skin in a different way than we had been doing in previous years. You want to kick that off with the Captain. What would happen to Captain Janeway if she hit a region of space where there was going to be nothing for two solid years? Not only would it add some visual interest in terms of the void, I think she would turn inward, and begin to face the demons that brought her here in the first place. That's kind of what we wanted to do, take Janeway to rock bottom, and let her see the light again. I think it was also about a coming together, a family, and realizing that this was a crew that was very different when the journey began. As they come out of the night space into the glorious nebula starfield at the end, imaginatively I wanted to convey a warm, fuzzy feeling. Did it work? Not as well as I'd hoped it would."

As promised by Braga, the audience quickly got a new look at VOYAGER's other main characters. In "Drone," Seven of Nine got the chance to play mentor to a new Borg, as well as experience loss. B'Elanna Torres was the center of "Extreme Risk," during which she revealed that the destruction of the Maquis had caused her significant trauma. "Timeless" showcased Garrett Wang as Harry Kim in the present and the future. In "Thirty Days," Paris followed a cause all the way to the brig. The Doctor made a friend and faced an ethical dilemma in "Nothing Human." The early Vulcan training of Tuvok was shown in flashback as he dealt with being stuck on a desert planet in "Gravity." Robert Beltran, who told the writer/producers he was interested in boxing, got to box as well as face some of his fears in "The Fight."

Not only did Neelix express his turmoil over the loss of his family in "Once Upon a Time," but the same episode reintroduced

continued on page 47



STAR TREK VOYAGER

GARRETT WANG

Ensign Kim on taking a larger role in the ensemble action, scoring and his love of snazzy costumes.

By Anna Kaplan

During the fifth season of STAR TREK: VOYAGER, Harry Kim, played by Garrett Wang finally made his way to the foreground. Wang was the first series regular to be seen in the opening episode "Night." His character was enjoying the black and white Holodeck program called "Captain Proton" in which he and Tom Paris battle the evil Dr. Chaotica (Martin Rayner). Captain Proton was such a success that a whole episode, "Bride of Chaotica" was filmed later in the season, VOYAGER's first all-out comedy.

Wang's most memorable performance fifth season was a far cry from the comedy of Captain Proton. In the episode "Timeless," the actor played two Harry Kims—one in Voyager's present, and a second in a possible future, in which a tortured Kim is trying to change the past. Remembered Wang, "That was definitely a difficult time of my life. It was very creatively stimulating to be able to try to put on two convincing people—the same person, but different time periods in his life. That was probably the most difficult, trying to stay in character. All actors out there, if they immerse themselves in their work, and they really prepare, and they are ready to do it, it doesn't just stop when the cameras stop rolling. When you go home, it goes with you to some extent."

Wang laughed, "I was definitely not a joy to be around during those seven days of filming, having to run through the gamut of emotions."

The actor described some of the ways he achieved the appearance of an older Kim. "I centered in on my voice, changed the voice quality a little bit, and also slowed down the movements. Kim is normally on fast tempo, compared to older Kim, who is between slow and medium tempo. I had to really keep that in mind throughout the episode, being able to flip back and forth. You could



Wang as Ensign Harry Kim, turning-in a stand-out performance in "Timeless," as an older, burned-out Ensign obsessed with saving the crew he lost.

just see the youthful energy in the younger Kim. I really tried, with the older Kim, to focus intensely upon the obsession of getting Voyager back, somebody who is very preoccupied almost to the point of being absent-minded. He's really, really on the edge."

In "Heroes and Demons" Wang got to don chainmail for his Beowulf program on the Holodeck, but his excitement about the costume only led to disappointment. "They decked me out. I was wearing chain-mail, a cape, sword, leggings. You name it, I had it. It was a great outfit. I was so excited. But I guess they were running behind. They needed to rush through. The director decided to use a closeup of me in the coverage, instead of showing the actual, entire outfit, which would have been really, really cool, because someone would then have made it into an action figure, I'm sure. All you see is a bit of a cape that's draped around my shoulders, but you don't see anything else. You don't even see the chain mail. What a

waste. Wardrobe spent all that time coming up with an outfit to fit this scene, and they didn't even highlight it at all."

Wang seemed a bit embarrassed to discuss Kim's big score fifth season. He said, "It was titled 'Alien Love Story.' They changed it to 'The Disease.' I hate that name. 'The Disease' will be the first episode where Ensign Kim actually has sex. In the episode when Kim goes back to Earth ['Non Sequiter'] and sees Libby [Jennifer Gatti], there was a scene in the bedroom, where I say, 'I'll never leave you.' We kiss, and we fall out of frame. As far as you know, all we did was kiss. I guess it's implied that we might have done something else, of course. But this episode really has Kim having fun, and developing a strong liking for this alien woman Tal [Musetta Vander]. They engage in sexual activity, although in her race it's a little different, because they have parts of their body that kind of glow when they are aroused."

Wang laughed, "I think they are going to add that in optical, in post. It's not going to be like her head is going to glow. I think this episode is really about how strong love can be for somebody. Feelings for somebody can change one's feelings about other things in their life, their work."

Not only did Kim get the girl in "Disease," he also angered Captain Janeway. Apparently times have changed since Captain Kirk (William Shatner) made his way across the Alpha Quadrant, because on Voyager, there are rules against Kim's behavior. Said Wang, "Kim is really into her. The Captain refuses to acknowledge that. She doesn't think he should be. It's violating protocol, and there is a big head-to-head with Kate. You don't really see a lot of that, so that's a good thing. That's another new thing, where the Kimster has it out with Captain."

Ensign Kim does not get to keep the girl. In the end, the woman leaves Kim literally lovesick. Wang explained the story of her people, the Varro. "They originally started



Wang in the FLASH GORDON parody "Bride of Chaotica," an all-out comedy episode—VOYAGER's first—teaming up with Paris as Captain Proton.

out as explorers, and they had a ship probably close to the size of Voyager. They have been out in space for so long, the population of that small ship has exponentially increased to the point that as they have gone along, they have built extra sections onto that ship. It's just one add-on section to another. Over time they have lost their explorer side. They have become a very closed society, and very xenophobic. The woman I fall in love with is kind of progressive, because she is part of a movement which really wants to break away. They want to separate the ship because they want to go explore. Her cohorts have placed a bioengineered virus that goes in and eats away the metal between the joints of the ship. They are trying to separate it themselves, when we come in."

Overall, Wang was very happy with the fifth season. He commented, "We've had some very strong shows for all the different characters of VOYAGER this year, which is good, because you need the balance. Throughout this year I've been able to get some very nice pieces to work on." □

think Chaotica is real. Their mission is "to contact other photonic life forms, to learn from them." Only one escapes, as Chaotica begins an attack. The Voyager crew finally connect their predicament with the holodeck program after they detect weapons fire.

Ken Biller helped rewrite the nicely humorous parody of FLASH GORDON. He said, "It was fun to write that inflated language, and come up with funny gags, and funny dialogue. It was fun to do a kind of comic romp. I thought that, while Kate's performance in the episode was, at certain points, a wonderful comic performance, I think that there was a mistake either in the performance choices or in the direction of it. Captain Janeway playing Queen Arachnia made sense, up to a certain point. There was a point at which, clearly, she had gotten what she needed to get. For some odd and, I thought, unexplained reason, she continued to assume this role, as opposed to being Captain Janeway wearing the costume, finishing up the mission. I just thought it got a little over-the-top."

"If I was meant to deny feelings, why was I born with them? Where is the logic in that?"

—Young Tuvok (Leroy D. Brazile)

GRAVITY ★★1/2

2/3/99. Production #205. Stardate 52438.9. Teleplay by Bryan Fuller and Nick Sagan. Story by Jimmy Diggs, Nick Sagan and Bryan Fuller. Directed by Terry Windell.

A young Vulcan man has been forced by his father to study with a Master (Joseph Ruskin). He has nowhere else to go, because he has not learned to control his emotions.

The young man is Tuvok.



Leroy D. Brazile as young Tuvok, studying emotional control with a Vulcan Master (Joseph Ruskin) in the painful flashback of "Gravity."

Tom, Tuvok and the Doctor have crashed on a desert planet. They meet up with an alien woman named Noss (Lori Petty). They manage to survive by learning to scavenge. Months go by, and they imagine that Voyager is long gone. Noss falls in love with Tuvok, who remembers the lessons of his youth, when he learned to suppress passion. He cannot, or will not, return her affection.

Noted Biller, "'Gravity' changed a lot from the original conception, to what it ultimately became, which was this exploration of a man who couldn't love. Terry Windell did a great job directing it. I thought it looked like a feature. The location was out in the desert."

Biller continued, "Ultimately I think it was a really good episode, to see Tuvok's training, and what happened to him, and to explore the fact that it's not that Vulcans can't feel emotion, it's that they have as a culture, society, trained themselves not to. There is certain tragedy in that."

Trivia note: Joseph Ruskin played Galt in "The Gamemasters of Triskelion" from the original series. He played the Klingon Tumeck in two episodes of DS9, "The House of Quark" and "Looking for par'Mach in All the Wrong Places."



Seven and Scarlett Pomers as Naomi Wildman, unaffected by the "Bliss" trapping everyone else, as an alien entity falsely lures Voyager home.

"A direct route to Earth's doorstep, out of the blue. What's wrong with this picture?"

—Captain Janeway

BLISS ★★

2/10/99. Stardate 52542.3. Production #209. Teleplay by Robert J. Doherty. Story by Bill Prady. Directed by Cliff Bole.

The crew is tricked into believing that they have found a wormhole leading to the Alpha Quadrant. Only Seven of Nine and Naomi, neither of whom want to return to Earth, are unaffected by whatever is trapping everyone else. The performances of Jeri Ryan and Scarlett Pomers, along with great visual effects, are the redeeming features of this episode.

Biller said, "Bill Prady, who pitched and wrote the story, is a big fan of the show. He is one of the executive producers of DHARMA AND GREG. He had this idea about the pitcher plant, a plant that sends out false pheromones to attract its prey. 'Bliss' was not my favorite episode. It's kind of like old-fashioned STAR TREK. A big monster in space that eats starships has the potential for being silly."

"My parents underestimated the Collective.... Because of their arrogance, I was raised by Borg."

—Seven of Nine

DARK FRONTIER ★★1/2

2/17/99. Production #211 and 212. Written by Brannon Braga and Joe Menosky. Part I directed by Cliff Bole. Part II directed by Terry Windell.

A Borg probe vessel has detected Voyager. Instead of falling prey to the Borg, Voyager destroys the probe. Data nodes recovered from the debris allow Seven of Nine to reproduce Borg tactical information. She finds the location of a heavily damaged sphere. Janeway decides to attack the sphere to try and obtain a transwarp coil.

Janeway asks a reluctant Seven to read

Seven glimpses her Borgified father (Kirk Bailey) in "Dark Frontier," an epic two-parter telecast as a TV-movie, a February sweeps ratings winner.



STAR TREK VOYAGER

THE MAKING OF "EQUINOX"

How Voyager discovered a stranded Federation Science Vessel, fifth season's powerful cliffhanger.

At end of fifth season, Brannon Braga and Joe Menosky needed a finale for VOYAGER. "We knew we wanted to do a cliffhanger," said Braga. "We decided that we were not going to take the ship home, which is not precluded from happening. I had this image, a ship of people who were stuck in the Delta Quadrant almost as long as we have been, maybe a little bit longer, but they have not responded the same way. They've done some very, very bad things, including mass murder. We created an interesting kind of anti-Janeway character, played by John Savage, a wonderful actor. They go head-to-head. It's packed with inventive action, really creepy, vicious, new CGI-created aliens, and a wonderful character dynamic."

Explained Menosky, "By the time we got to the end of the season, we were all really exhausted. We didn't know what in the world we were going to do for the last episode. Brannon and Rick Berman worked out some of this episode. We probably had a week to go before prep, before Brannon came up with an idea that was workable. I just had no hope for it at all. It had the feeling of elements stitched together without a driving point of view [with a] haphazard and clunky structure and story."

For Menosky, the show's saving grace was a bigger cast. Noted Menosky, "One of the things that is very typical to this series is two alien guest stars, two new sets, maybe a couple of opticals, or the exterior of the planet. When you see that over and over again, it gets really tiresome to watch, and tiresome to write. One thing this did have going for us is that we had four major speaking roles. We had John Savage, who is a really good actor, and other good actors. As a result we could have interesting character dynamics. You could follow threaded, character arcs in a way that felt bigger than a single episode. There is a feeling of character possibility and largeness to this single



The crew of "Equinox" faces-down one of the lethal aliens which open up spatial vortices on the ship and kill on contact, ambitious CGI effects by Santa Barbara Studios.

episode that I think substitutes for the grand sweep of the other two-parters that we have done."

Menosky added, "We clarified the structure halfway through the writing of it. Instead of sitting down and outlining it, and then writing it, we just wrote it. We didn't even know really where we were headed. We would just write a scene and think what would be cool to come next. We wrote it in a way that was very satisfying creatively, in terms of how the episode and the story actually spun itself out. By the end of the episode, I was really happy with it. It completely surprised me."

Noted director David Livingston, "I don't know if it quite has the edginess of 'Scorpion,' but maybe it will. The drawings that Peter Lauritson showed me of the creature were wonderful. It starts off as being this beautiful, butterfly kind of creature, and turns into this horrible, murderous thing, because we do bad things to it. Peter is taking the creature to Santa Barbara Studios, who do outstanding work. I think they are going top cabin on this one, to really make it wonderful."

"Equinox" depends to a great degree on

the appearance of the alien beings, devised by the visual effects team, under producer Dan Curry, supervisor Ronald B. Moore and coordinator Elizabeth Castro. Said Moore, "This is probably the most ambitious show I have ever seen. We've got a lot of creatures. It's a completely new species. The creature ultimately was designed at Pacific Ocean Post. All of the [CG] vendors did drawings. P.O.P., Foundation Imaging, Digital Muse and Santa Barbara Studios all put in some drawings. Peter Lauritson and I went over it with Rick Berman and Brannon Braga. They picked the one that they liked, and we had that modified a little bit to satisfy everybody that we could."

Work on the alien creatures, who transform from ethereal beings to monsters was completed at Santa Barbara Studios. The group there included Pete Travers, CG supervisor; Lance Wilhoite, coordinator; and Bruce Jones, CGI executive producer.

The Equinox is the Federation science vessel that Voyager finds in the Delta Quadrant. Moore explained the design process for this new ship. "Rick Sternbach is the Federation ship guru," said Moore. "He knows where every rivet is on these ships. He came up with drawings. I would get blueprints, and Digital Muse would get them. I think we got a ship that's looking very, very neat."

Livingston added, "We still have to go back and shoot another day because we are short. It was a long shooting schedule, and very difficult, because a lot of it was with no lights. There are four sequences where we go to visit their ship, finding people dead or dying. Those were all shot with Sims [palm] beacons, and a lot of sparks and smoke and nitrogen. It was tough on the crew, especially for the last episode, because everybody was so tired and burnt out after the long season."

Anna Kaplan

through her parents extensive field notes about the Borg. Seven's mother Erin Hansen (Laura Stepp) and her father Magnus (Kirk Bailey) took their four-year-old daughter Annika (Katelin Petersen) into unknown territory to hunt for the rumored Borg. While Seven reads their log entries, we see parts of their journey and her memories in flashback.

The Borg Queen (Susannah Thompson) attempts to seduce Seven back into the Collective, Janeway plans to free her, using the Hansen's knowledge. Janeway and crew save Seven, and destroy the Queen's ship. The transwarp coil takes them some fifteen years closer to home before giving out.

(For more on this two-parter, see "The Making of 'Dark Frontier,'" page 32.)

"All Starfleet personnel must obtain authorization from their c.o. as well as clearance from their medical officer before initiating an intimate relationship with an alien species."

—Harry Kim

THE DISEASE

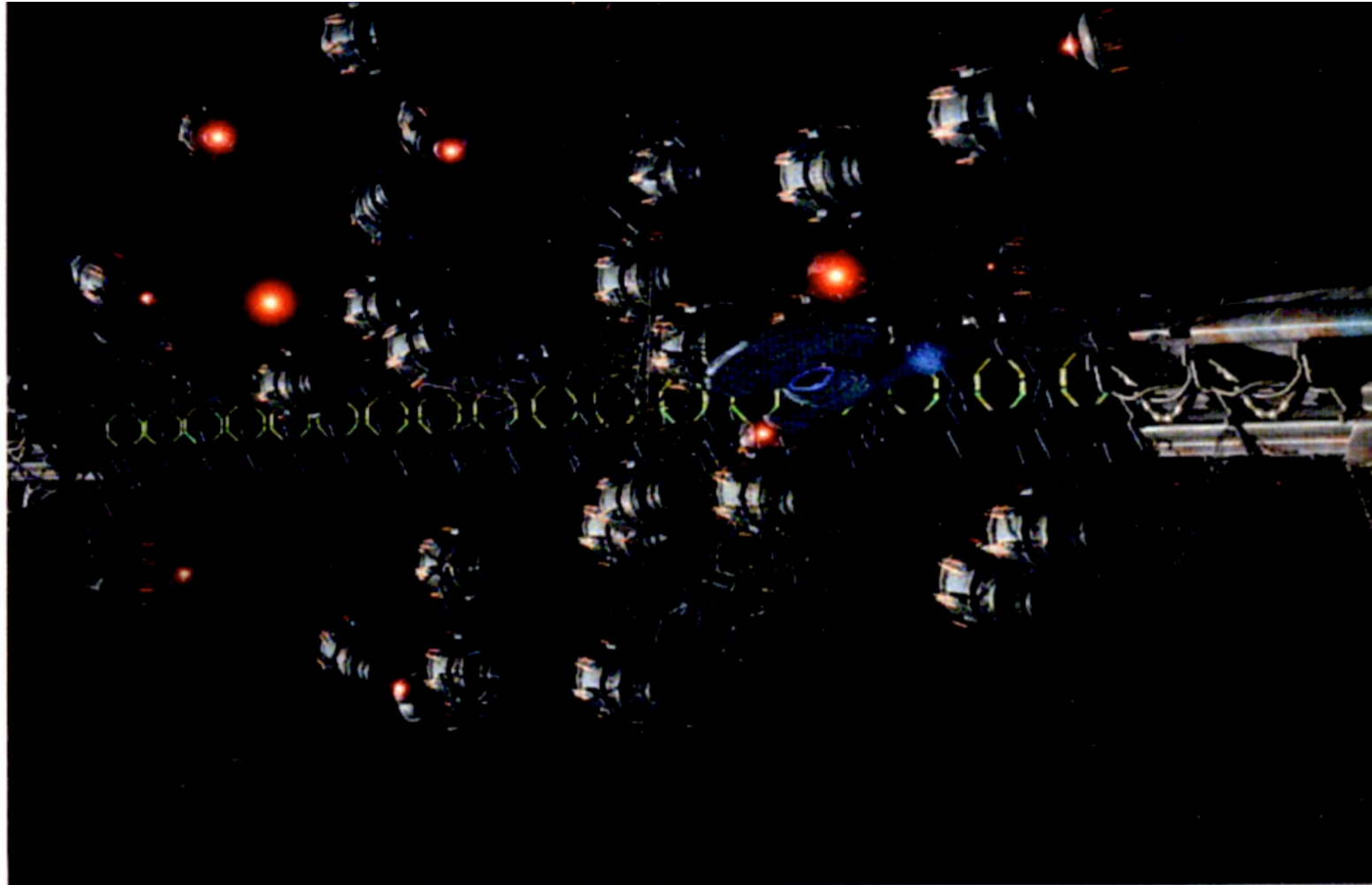
★★

2/24/99. Production #212. Stardate not given. Teleplay by Michael Taylor. Story by Ken Biller. Directed by David Livingston.

The episode begins with a view of an alien ship, revealing section after section of an enormous vessel. The shot eventually shifts inside to reveal a room in which Harry Kim and an alien female are kissing. The Voyager crew is assisting the Varro, a xenophobic alien race whose ship is having structural problems. Janeway is attempting to gain the trust of their leader Jippeq (Charles Rocket), by fixing the Varro's multiple warp engines. The Varro vessel is called a "generational ship" in which the Varro have lived for 400 years. Harry is "violating protocol" by engaging in intimate relations with Tal (Musetta Vander).

Biller said, "I wanted to explore the notion that people will stay in relationships that they know are unhealthy for them, because they feel an almost physical need or compulsion to be with that other person. The idea was that in the science fiction world you could explore that as a reality. A love affair with an alien literally could make you sick, and yet you felt the compulsion to go through with it. I liked those parts of the episode, that exploration of love. I thought that the scenes between Kim and Janeway were great. That was really good character stuff that Mike Taylor did a great job with. The whole subplot, which was not in my original story, and I objected to strenuously, about the aliens who want to break free of their oppressive society, just felt really clichéd and tacked on. The story that I wrote was a much more intimate story about these two people. I was more interested in the relationship and the repercussions that it has in Kim's life, and the way that it affects his relationship with the Captain, and other people. I thought that

Ensign Kim and Varro Tal (Musetta Vander) in "The Disease," engaging in interspecies sexual relations prohibited by Federation protocols.



The colossal Varro generational ship breaks apart in fifth season's "The Disease," CGI by Foundation Imaging, supervised by Ronald B. Moore, the most complex CGI model ever made by Foundation for TV.

the audience to a charming recurring character, Naomi Wildman, played by Scarlett Pomers. Naomi developed a very interesting relationship with Seven of Nine. Noted Braga, "Naomi Wildman turned out to be a real treasure this year. Scarlett Pomers is a terrific young actress. We wanted to create a kid who wasn't your prototypical TV kid. This is a very intelligent

girl, beyond her age, but extremely neurotic, too. She may be a scientist, but she's scared of monsters. She's an interesting little child. There is something really appealing about the idea that the Voyager only has one child, Voyager's child, and she's kind of special. Everybody had a role in bringing her up. The Doctor taught her, and Kim was her little buddy. Everyone has an interest in this little girl, because she is their only kid."

Despite the difficulties with "Night," by the hundredth episode of VOYAGER, the season's sixth, called "Timeless," the machine was hitting on all cylinders. Actor Garrett Wang's character Harry Kim played a big role in the episode. "Timeless" boasted a story by Braga, Menosky and Berman, with a teleplay by Braga and Menosky. It was directed by LeVar Burton, who also guest starred as Geordi La Forge. "Timeless" featured a complex storyline weaving back and forth from Voyager's future to present. It also delivered a remarkable opening sequence with the ship trapped under an iceberg, and later a stunning crash that easily matched the demise of the Enterprise-D in GENERATIONS.

Said Braga, "To me, 'Timeless,' and I know this sounds pretentious, was perfect.

"Rick Berman is involved in every step of the storytelling process. He adds huge, important story elements that I think people are not usually aware of."

—Writer Joe Menosky—

It all came together. The optical effects this year have been astounding. That crash sequence they did was amazing, just amazing, blew me away. In the TNG days, opticals were the icing on the cake. That was the attitude toward opticals. To me, opticals are as important as any part of this show, and Peter Lauritson and his team, and Dan Curry and his team, have just delivered incredible stuff. That was an episode that a lot of people told me brought a tear to their eye at the end. We knew we wanted something special for the hundredth episode, and it was tough, but we pulled it out of the hat somehow. It was a nice little treat to see Geordi, and LeVar did a great job directing, and Garrett was superb. It all turned out well."

Many of the episodes in VOYAGER's fifth season received critical acclaim. "Dark Frontier" was a favorite of fans and reviewers alike, coming in with some 7.43 million viewers in the Nielsen ratings, and getting a "Cheer" in *TV Guide*. The two-hour "television film" came in third in its timeslot in the 18-43 demographic, behind only ABC and Fox. Noted Menosky, "Paramount and UPN are extremely pleased, and that is far more important than raw numbers, and is far more important with respect to the future of STAR TREK as a franchise."

An important guest star fifth season was John Savage, perhaps best known for his role in *THE DEERHUNTER*, but more recently seen in *MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE* and *THE THIN RED LINE*, cast as a Starfleet Captain lost in the Delta Quadrant

continued on page 51

STAR TREK VOYAGER

SPECIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

Supervisors Ron Moore and Mitch Suskin on completing the transition to full CGI capabilities.

By Anna Kaplan

STAR TREK VOYAGER visual effects supervisor Mitch Suskin has enjoyed his years working on VOYAGER and the changes that have occurred. He said, "I think the transition to CG in the minds of everybody is pretty solid [now]. Nobody questions it, and beyond that, they probably even think we can do more than we can. I think it's filtered through the mind set of STAR TREK that we can try more challenging things. Also, in the composite bay, we moved from a linear edit system method of compositing, to doing it all in nonlinear boxes, in computers, Inferno's, SGI based computers.

"We can track things that we could never track before, and the production knows that. Now it's really not that difficult or expensive. It has freed up the directors, in many cases, to move the camera in ways they didn't before. We are getting thrown more challenges, and they are coming to us more often, and asking if we can do things when there are production problems."

Suskin and coordinator Arthur Codron

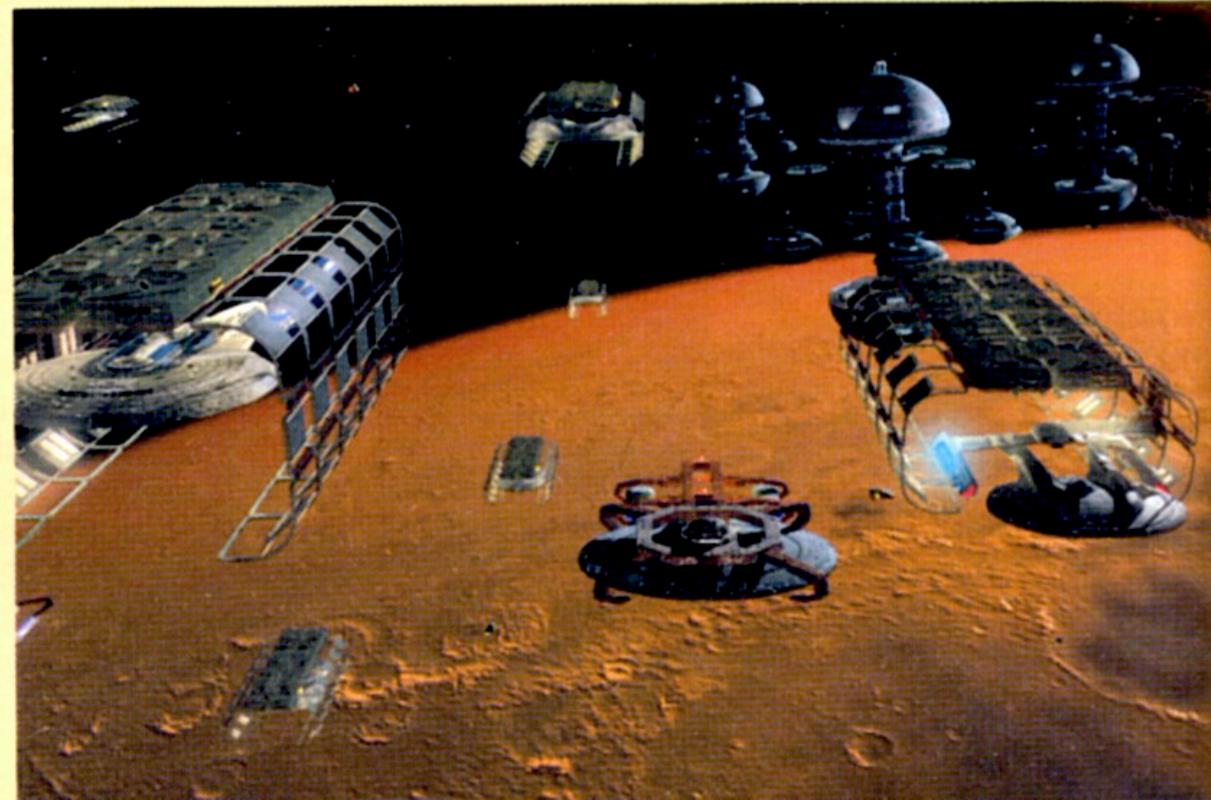
started out VOYAGER's fifth season with a difficult challenge, the effects for "Night," with Voyager in a completely dark region of space. Recalled Suskin, "That certainly had us tearing our hair out, the reason being that we got a script that said, 'The Voyager is going through a place that has no stars, no planets, nothing.' The audience can assume that, even though you usually don't see the sun, or whatever is lighting the Voyager, it's obviously being lit by something. When there is nothing there, we have no way to cheat the lighting. We had to come up with a lighting scheme that made it appear that the Voyager was being lit by its own lights. We went through numerous iterations, with Mojo at Foundation Imaging trying to make that work."

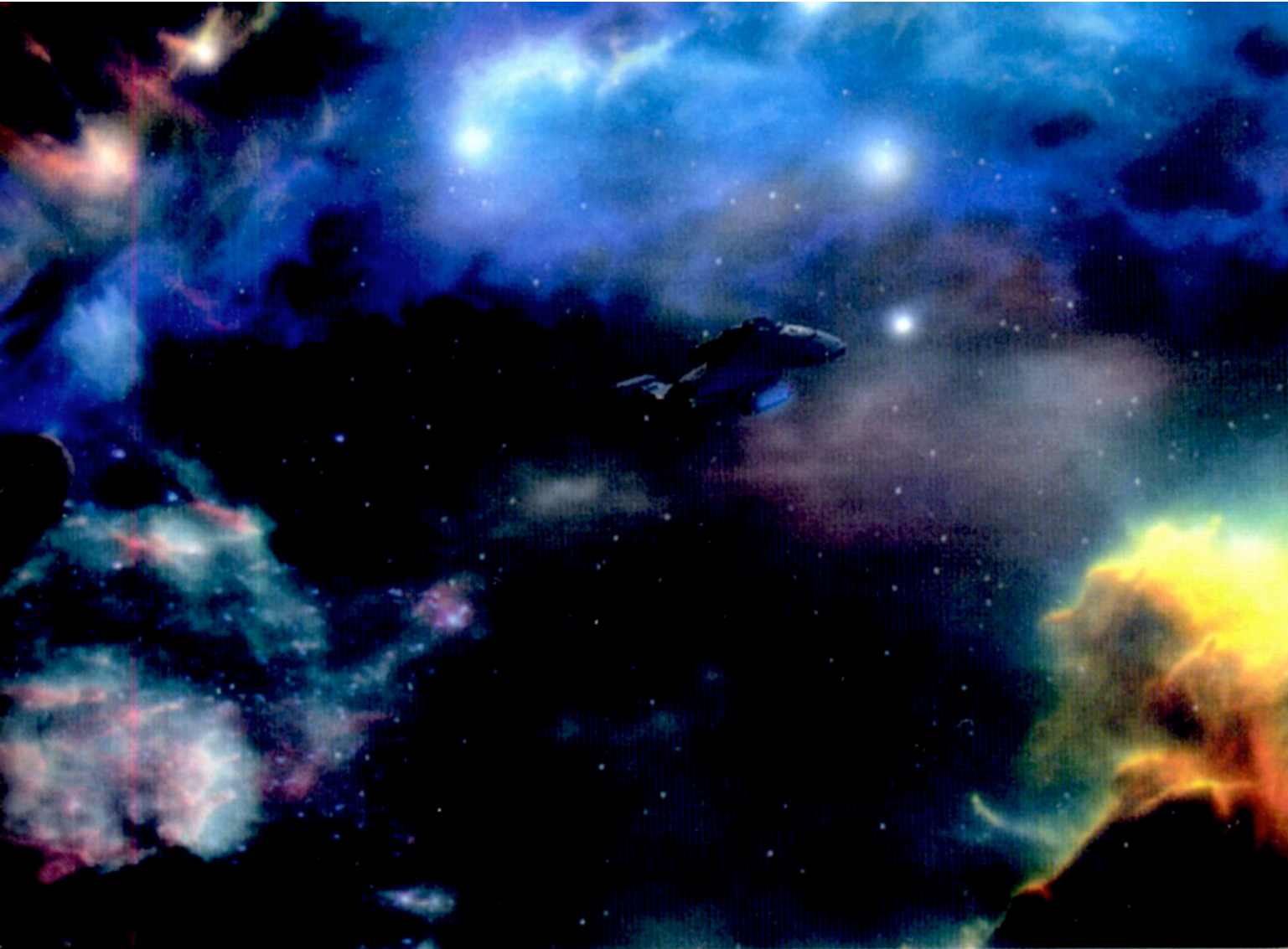
There were other CG ships out there in the dark, including vessels belonging to the "Night aliens." Continued Suskin, "The night ship was fun because it was so unusual compared to the normal ships on VOYAGER. We're not normally given license to do something quite that unusual and wacky. We had a sketch that visual effects producer Dan Curry refined and worked on."

Suskin added, "We had been going through this black space. When we came out of it, we had to have one or two shots where we suddenly reveal going from blackness to this rich, beautiful space full of life." Rob Bonchune from Foundation explained that he used images from the Hubble telescope to create the star-filled space. He noted, "I just took different images, built it all together, put in flares, threw in a couple of planets. It was one of the only times I just put it all together and it worked well right away."

Tom Paris' "Captain Proton" Holodeck program, a send-up of the serialized FLASH GORDON films of the 1930s and 1940s, first appeared in "Night." It was so successful, an entire episode was built around it, entitled "Bride of Chaotica." Noted Suskin, "'Bride of Chaotica,' I think everybody knew it was going to be really fun to work on, so that it emulates that 1940s serial look without being completely over the top. Proton's ship, something that Dan Curry designed, was a lot like the Flash Gordon ship. Chaotica's castle was a digital matte painting that Eric Chauvin did. We

Moore, working with coordinator Liz Castro, made full use of CGI for fifth season shows like "Relativity" (below) showing Voyager under construction at the Utopia Planitia shipyards above Mars, CGI created by Foundation Imaging. Moore and Suskin alternate episodes, working under effects producer Dan Curry.





Voyager leaves the darkness of "Night," a CGI composite by Ron Bronchune of Foundation Imaging using images from the Hubble telescope, a show supervised by Suskin, working with coordinator Arthur Codron.

intentionally used the same angle over and over again."

Suskin more or less alternates shows with visual effects supervisor Ronald B. Moore and his team, working under producer Dan Curry. Large shows that Moore worked on included the second half of "Dark Frontier" and the fifth season cliffhanger "Equinox." During fifth season David Takemura supervised a couple of shows when the other teams had their hands full. Noted Moore, "They were all big shows. [Fifth season was] one of the biggest seasons yet. I expect season [six] to be even more so. [Executive producer] Brannon Braga is very ambitious when he puts a lot of the stuff together. The problem is that it really does cost a lot. An hour of time from CGI or in the bay is a lot of money. Every show I worked on, Brannon was right there, even on the set. So many times changes had to come up even while they were shooting, and he was there."

For the episode "Relativity," Moore and coordinator Liz Castro had to come up with something that would convince the audience of the occurrence of multiple temporal explosions. Laughed Moore, "This is the fun part, to try to conjecture what something like that would actually look like." In the episode, Seven of Nine (Jeri Ryan) is recruited by future time police to go back and find a temporal bomb planted on Voyager. She has to go to the past to find it, at one point checking out

“It’s filtered through the mind set that we can try more challenging things. We’re looking forward to bigger raises and better shows in the future.”

—Mitch Suskin, EFX supervisor—

Voyager as it is being built. The CGI for this episode was done at Foundation Imaging. Explained Moore, "We are visiting the ship building yards on Mars. Voyager is in a state of construction, so we are going back in time a little bit. We get to go to the ship when Janeway [Kate Mulgrew] first walks aboard. You can see Mars and see the ships in different stages

of construction."

The episode "Extreme Risk" was the next show Suskin worked on after "Night." It opened with a scene of B'Elanna Torres skydiving. Explained Suskin, "We had to see her go from being freefall in the clouds to being suspended in space, and landing on the holodeck floor. That shot was created completely synthetically by [John] Teska. We gave him a still photograph of the Holodeck that became the background, but we didn't shoot anything for that. We shot a bunch of stills of Torres in her suit. He built the CG stand-in and animated it. He did it as a test. The editor and director were concerned about it, and they go, 'It's perfect. That's it.'"

In the same episode, Tom Paris and his fellow crewman completed the Delta Flyer, a new shuttle augmented by Borg technology and built for the Delta Quadrant. Said Suskin, "Because it was a new ship that was very important, both the set that had to be built by the art department, and the exterior of the ship went through a lot of design scrutiny. The Delta Flyer was all CG done

Garrett was really great."

"We are gathered here today, not as Starfleet officers, but as friends and family, to celebrate the marriage of two of Voyager's finest."

—Captain Janeway

COURSE: OBLIVION

★★★

3/13/99. Production #213. Stardate 52586.3. Teleplay by Bryan Fuller and Nick Sagan. Story by Bryan Fuller. Directed by Anson Williams.

Tom Paris and B'Elanna Torres are married by the Captain. As they get ready for their honeymoon, B'Elanna falls ill. Soon many crewmen are sick, their cells breaking down. The ship and all its components are losing molecular cohesion. The recently enhanced warp coil seems to have triggered the degradation, but shutting it down doesn't help. B'Elanna is the first to die. The Doctor cannot do anything. Neelix gives Chakotay and Tuvok a clue—everything is degrading except things they brought onboard after a certain date. Something happened to the ship then, and looking back over Voyager's past experiences gives the answer. Watch this very effective and also tragic episode if you want to find out what happened. Don't read any farther if you don't want to see spoilers.

This episode was a follow-up to last year's "Demon," which was written by Ken Biller and also directed by Anson Williams. Menosky explained that the story of mimetic aliens had been floating around for years. Every time he and Braga started to work on it, they couldn't do it. Menosky recalled, "Brannon had some great images. One was opening with Voyager above Earth, this great homecoming sequence. There are fireworks in the sky, and everybody is going down to their homecomings. Janeway has a wonderful tearful reunion with Mark. She kisses Mark and she snaps his neck, end of teaser. Then he had this image of like a thousand Voyagers converging on Earth. Somehow, these duplicate Voyagers were being created that didn't even know who they were. Writing the teleplay, it just didn't seem to work. We shelved it, and did 'Scorpion' instead. Fourth season, for November sweeps, we pulled out the mimetic show as a possible two-parter. Again at the last possible moment, we threw out the mimetic aliens, and came up with 'Year of Hell.' Months later the same thing happened with 'The Killing Game.' The mimetic aliens got to have this really weird reputation as being a negative muse. It was this weird thing floating around that no one wanted in the room. Eventually, someone came up with this idea, it might have been Ken for 'Demon,' toward the latter part of the fourth season, not as a two-parter, but as a single episode. Fifth season, Bryan Fuller came up with the idea, what if we followed the adventures of those people that we left on the Demon planet? Ironically, the mimetic alien show became a two-parter in a strange way."

Biller said about "Course: Oblivion," "There were a few scenes where I thought it was really

Janeway presides at the marriage ceremony of Paris and Torres in "Course Oblivion," a clever "what if" follow-up to fourth season's "Demon."



emotionally powerful, like when Chakotay died, and Janeway decides that she's going to take his advice. There was some discussion about whether it was too bleak at the end. I had written a version where they actually get that time capsule out. The real Voyager does come along, and the ship is gone, but they find the time capsule. Brannon wanted to do a tragedy about these people who are struggling to come to terms with who they were, and what home meant, and trying to embody the impossible images of these people who they've been created to resemble."

Just how did those Demon planet duplicates make a ship, get up in space, and forget their origins? Said Biller, "This mimetic life form that existed on that planet could re-create anything. It would re-create a ship that had an atmosphere in which these people could live. We didn't want to answer a lot of questions like, how long has that ship been out there? Some of the episodes that we saw earlier in the season, was it that crew? Or was it the real crew? It's kind of intriguing to think about."

"Begin Round One."

—The voice of Voyager's computer
(Majel Barrett Roddenberry)

THE FIGHT ★

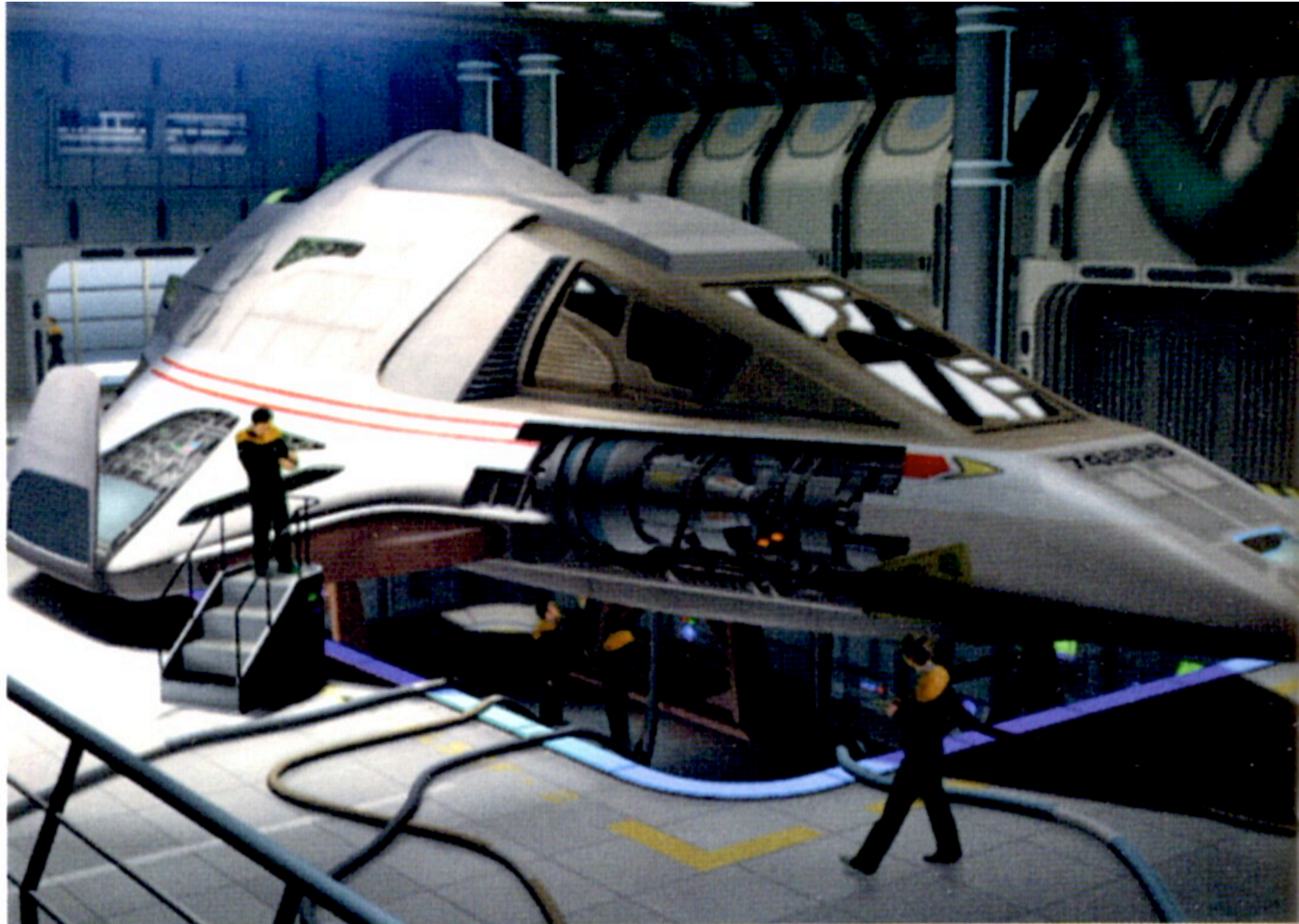
3/24/99. Production #208. Stardate not given. Teleplay by Joe Menosky. Story by Michael Taylor. Directed by Rick Kolbe.

Chakotay is boxing in a holodeck program, with Boothby as his coach. Or he is in sickbay, hallucinating about boxing. Or he is on a vision quest with his old, crazy, Great Grandfather (Ned Romero). Or Voyager is in chaotic space, where the laws of physics do not work. Or he is trying to make first contact with an alien race that is so different he has to go crazy to communicate with them. I gave up trying to figure it out, even though I tried really hard.

Writer Menosky described the genesis of the script, which was Michael Taylor's first on-staff story. "There was a guy living in the 21st century, and feeling himself become unhinged, because there are aliens trying to make contact. We were telling that story simultaneously with Chakotay suffering a mental breakdown as a result of a first contact happening in our VOYAGER time. That was the story that Mike Taylor wrote. It was an extremely well-written document. I don't know if he actually put footnotes in it, but he might have, it was so detailed, and so intellectual. Rick Berman read the story, and he could not believe it. He just went off on, 'These god damn people like Mike Taylor, you need a subscription to the 'Journal of the American Medical Association' to understand his god damn story.' Rick just threw it out."

Perhaps they should have listened to Berman. Instead, Braga re-potted the story. Menosky wrote the script, which incorporated the idea of first contact necessitating a mental breakdown, along with an idea of Robert Beltran's about Chakotay boxing. After filming, they were short, so they added a sickbay frame. None of it made any sense. Said Menosky, "I'm confused when I watch it, so I can't imagine the

Boothby (Ray Walston) coaches Chakotay on the holodeck in "The Fight," or pick your own interpretation for this confusing episode.

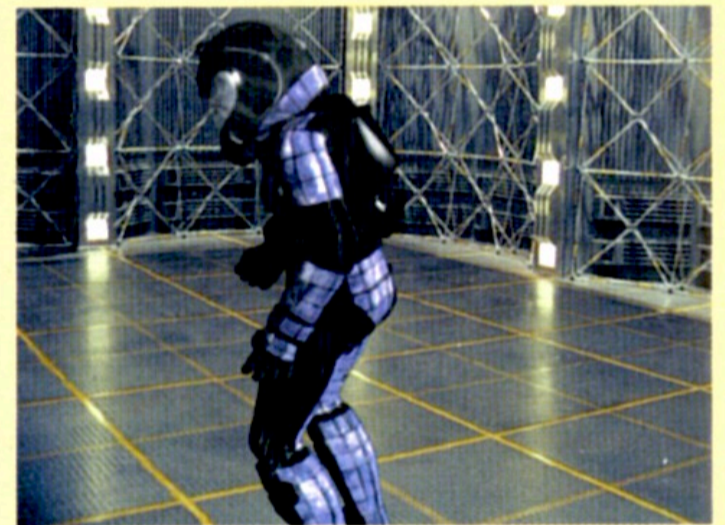


The Delta Flyer under construction in "Extreme Risk," a digital matte shot by Foundation Imaging. Right: A CGI Torres skydiving on the Holodeck, episode effects supervised by Mitch Suskin.

at Foundation, with the exception of the shot in the docking bay where it's being built. Eric Chauvin got the model data from Foundation. He built the docking bay set in a 3-D matte painting."

For Moore, the effects work he enjoyed most during fifth season came in "30 Days." He explained, "That was really exciting to do. I liked it because we have never gone underwater before. Visual effects producer Dan Curry played an important part in that. Dan has been wanting to do an underwater show for years and years, so when this one came along, I asked him to play an important part. We like to work together. We were an effects team on TNG most of the way through it. He helped me in designing some of the shots. Senior illustrator Rick Sternbach designed the buildings and the ships. Digital Muse did all the [computer] animation. I just had a great time with the underwater stuff. It was very unusual for us."

For "Gravity," the crew went on location to a Southern California desert. Suskin's visual effects team had to add the ships seen crashed on the planet, as well as some of its indigenous life. Said Suskin, "We shot a lot of background still frames, because production didn't have time to do it. One of the shots was used with the spiders. The prop department did build a prop spider, but the actual spider you see in the show is a still frame that we shot, and John Teska built. We gave him the spider from the prop department. He built a [CG] duplicate of it, and animated it, and did the camera moves on the still background." The many matte shots of crashed ships in the desert were done by Eric Chauvin, including a view of Noss' ship.



Moore was very happy with the opening shot for "The Disease," which showed a large ship in space, and traveled from outside to inside, all by means of CGI accomplished at Foundation Imaging. He noted, "That opening shot in 'The Disease,' I am really proud of. I got a call from Foundation that it was going to take something like four or five hours per frame [to render]. It was a 20 or 30 second shot. It was huge, and it was worth it. That was the most complex model that Foundation had ever made for TV. We had the roll, and that ship had all the little pieces to it that had to be able to separate. Mojo [at Foundation] went in and worked with the animator. We would never have made it at five hours a frame. They pulled off the stuff that you didn't see, like the backside of the ship, and just pulled all that out of the render. It only rendered what actually showed on the screen, and was able to knock it back down into reason. The shot connects up on the interior, and up to the point of the connect-up it was all CGI. We come through the window and see that room in CGI. It made the change just as the door opens. I think that was one of the better ones we did."

Suskin laughed, "We love STAR TREK, and we are looking forward to big raises and better shows in the future." □

“We got really high profile actors and it dignifies the show in a way it deserves. Our peers and colleagues recognize us by their willingness to do the show.”

—Ethan Phillips, Neelix—

for the season's cliffhanger "Equinox." Noted Braga, "He's a brilliant actor. It's been an interesting experience dealing with him. He's just not like any actor we've had on the show. He's a very ponderous, internal, big-screen actor, who brings an intensity to the role that we have never really seen in a guest star. He's not like any Starfleet captain you have ever seen. He's a very dark, brooding Captain who has had a terrible experience in the Delta Quadrant."

Ethan Phillips enthused about the guest stars, including SEINFELD's Jason Alexander, saying, "It's a real honor to have [John Savage] on the show, just as it was to have Jason Alexander and a lot of people that have guested. We have got some really high profile actors, and I think it dignifies the show in the way that the show deserves. We may not get recognized by the Emmys but our peers and our colleagues recognize us by their willingness to act on our show."

One guest who didn't appear fifth season was John de Lancie as Q, because no one came up with the right Q story. Menosky explained that an idea de Lancie had for Q started their thinking for what turned out to be "11:59." He said, "Brannon and I went to Rick Berman's house for Thanksgiving dinner, and Brent Spiner [Data] and John de Lancie were there. When everybody gets together, a lot of times people just start talking about stories. John had an idea for a Q episode. He had a couple of interesting images, of Q on an ocean somewhere on a beach, either having lost his complete identity as Q, or lost his will to live. Somehow he gets involved with an everyday kind of person, and that person's fate and life somehow affects Q. That was his pitch, and it had some nice images. For awhile Brannon and I were thinking about doing Janeway's distant ancestor and Q in the year 2000. We also thought about Janeway's distant ancestor and Guinan, and this might have been a Whoopi [Goldberg] episode. When it finally came down to write it, we did try to go in the



The Doctor diagnoses that Seven (Jeri Ryan) is suffering from a Borg multi-personality disorder in "Infinite Regress."

direction of no science fiction at all, no guest stars from previous episodes, and just see if we could make it work. If someone came up with a brilliant Q story we'd do it in a second. There would be no question."

Bringing Guinan to a VOYAGER episode was also considered for the 100th episode, but discarded. Recalled LeVar Burton, "Brannon brought me into the process very early on, because at one point there was idea on the table to have Whoopi featured in that hundredth episode. I had actually, on behalf of Brannon and the company, approached Whoop to see how she would feel about it. They wanted to sort of take the temperature before they dove head first into the script. Whoop was tickled at the prospect. So we started, but they just could not come up with a story, I guess, that really satisfied having Guinan there. They really weren't happy with what they were coming up with, so they sort of shifted gears and went in another direction."

Noted Braga about VOYAGER's ongoing sixth season, "I think the viewers can expect a season akin to season five, but hopefully with lots of surprises, continued character growth, all of things people have come to expect from VOYAGER, and hopefully a little bit more."

When might the crew of VOYAGER return to the Alpha Quadrant? Braga answered cryptically, "It could happen at any time. When it feels right, we are going to do it. It doesn't feel right yet. It doesn't feel right, it really doesn't. I will know. It's an instinctual thing. It's not about ratings, it's about what's right for the series. I will know." □

audience not being confused."

Menosky added, "There is one thing that I am very proud of in this episode, and that is the actual first contact sequence. The result is truly hallucinogenic."

The one star is for that moment.

"You have a problem, Captain. I am the solution."
—Kurros (Jason Alexander)

THINK TANK

★★★

3/31/99. Production #214. Stardate not given. Teleplay by Michael Taylor. Story by Rick Berman and Brannon Braga. Directed by Terrence O'Hara.

Voyager falls into a trap set by the Hazari, a race of bounty hunters, who soon have surrounded the ship. As Janeway tries to solve the Hazari paradox, an isomorphic projection of an alien named Kurros appears, to offer his help. He leads a think tank, who will help unravel any problem, for a price, something unique that only Voyager has to offer, perhaps technology, or even a food recipe.

Janeway is tempted by their offer of help, until Kurros reveals that he wants Seven of Nine as payment. Janeway decides to out-think the think tank.

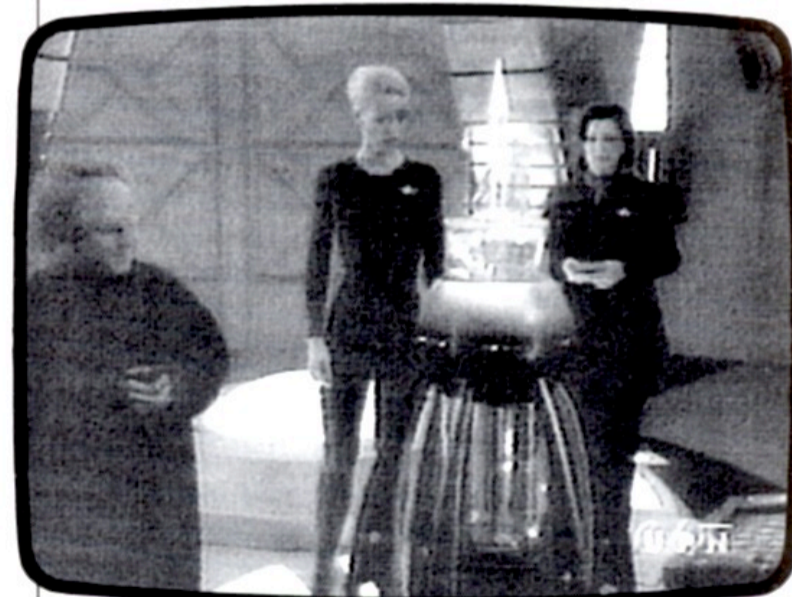
Said writer Michael Taylor about SEINFELD's Jason Alexander, laughing, "I think Jason did a very interesting turn as my lead villain in that show. This is an intellectual puzzle, a game, which I hope we carry off well. For Jason Alexander's fans, it will be a chance to see him in a very different kind of role. At one point, he had trouble with some of the technical dialogue, and he started screaming, 'Jerry!'"

Added Menosky, "That was an idea Brannon came up with. Taylor did a really wonderful first draft, very quirky, very great, really interesting characters. He's able to create characters, not just translate a beat sheet or an outline into dialogue and action. He actually gives you something that surprises you when you read a first draft."

He continued, "I always often think, if I were nine years old now, would I think this was cool? I am very, very conscious of creating and sustaining the next generation of STAR TREK fans. I am really conscious of the perfection of a really good, stand-alone episode. 'Think Tank' is very much in that realm, this idea of a quirky group of extremely talented aliens who hire themselves out to people for strange payments in order to solve their problems. If I was nine or ten years old I would think, that's really cool, and I wish I was on that ship."

I happen to have an almost ten-year-old critic on hand, who did think the episode was very cool.

Kurros (Jason Alexander) introduces Seven and Janeway to the artificial intelligence that will solve their problems for a price in "Think Tank."



"I lost my temper. No big deal."

—B'Elanna Torres

JUGGERNAUT

★★1/2

4/26/99. Production #215. Stardate unknown. Teleplay by Bryan Fuller and Nick Sagan. Story by Bryan Fuller. Directed by Allan Kroeker.

Voyager plucks two Malon survivors from escape pods. Their ship, which is about to

STAR TREK VOYAGER

ROBERT DUNCAN MCNEILL

Paris on Captain Proton and directing Trek's winning musical "Someone To Watch Over Me."

By Anna Kaplan

Robert Duncan McNeill's favorite experience during VOYAGER's fifth season may have been directing "Someone to Watch Over Me." In the past, McNeill directed "Sacred Ground" and "Unity," both more or less traditional STAR TREK fare. This was different. Said McNeill, "It's a very unusual episode. There are no strange, weird planets or aliens. It's a real traditional romantic comedy. I think it's a really fun and surprising way that they have dealt with it. I think the audience is going to be sucked into the story."

McNeill is starting to feel more like a real director. He explained, "This time directing, I really felt very comfortable and relaxed. I just recently had started directing over at Nickelodeon. The fact that I started directing outside helped me not only feel comfortable, but it helped the whole crew and the cast feel like, 'He's becoming a real director. He's not just an actor on our show who is trying to direct.' I also had a short film that I shot, produced and directed. That movie has been out at film festivals all year. It's called THE BATTERY. Ethan Phillips is in it. The directing has been very exciting, and I'm very excited to continue with those opportunities here at STAR TREK. As we wind into our last couple of years around here, I hope to keep doing more."

As Tom Paris, McNeill was busy fifth season. The episode which featured his character the most was called "30 Days." Recalled the actor, "The first version of that episode I didn't like. By the end, the episode was about ten minutes short when they cut it together. It gave us an opportunity to look back at it and say, 'How can we



McNeill as Captain Proton with sidekick Garrett Wang in "Bride of Chaotica," a black & white holodeck homage to the FLASH GORDON serials of the '30s.

improve it?' The whole concept of Paris being in the brig from the beginning, and telling this as a flashback in a letter to his father, brought in a whole other element that was much darker and much more interesting. This was more complex; it had a lot more character stuff to play with. All those scenes with Paris in the brig gave it a framework that was much more interesting, and had much more mystery to it. I was very happy with it by the end. I thought it turned into a really good show."

Tom Paris also got to play in the Captain Proton holodeck program on and off all year, which he enjoyed, despite the fact that during the filming of "Bride of Chaotica" the VOYAGER bridge set caught on fire. McNeill remembered, "We've been here five years, and there's some dust that has collected on top of these sets, on the ceilings. There are lights that hang up high and one of the light bulbs popped."

He laughed, "I guess the spark smoldered down in the dust, and caught fire on the ceiling of the bridge, right during a pho-

to shoot with Rick Berman on the bridge. I don't know what the connection is, but I am sure there is some meaning behind it. No one was hurt, but we had a hungry crew, and our lunch was on that stage."

In general, Paris' relationship with B'Elanna Torres was visited infrequently during fifth season. Commented McNeill, "Brannon wanted to put the focus back on sci-fi stories, and edgy stories, and use this relationship when it was appropriate to the particular story. I would like to do a little more with the relationship. I think there's a lot of value there. But I kind of agree with Brannon. I don't want it to become a soap opera."

The relationship between Tom and B'Elanna was explored in a unique sci-fi way in the episode "Course Oblivion," which allowed the viewers to see the two getting married. Only later in the story does it become clear that this is not the real Voyager crew, but the alternates created on the Demon planet last season. Enthused McNeill, "It's a classic sci-fi thing. You follow this story along, and these horrible events are happening. You realize later on that it's an alternate group of people you have been watching. B'Elanna and I get married, but the audience does not know until much later on, that that was the cloned ship. Referring back to that old episode, this is what happened to that ship that was cloned. Things took a little different course on that ship. It's a real tragic ending, because at the last moment, when they think that maybe there might be some survivors, like the Titanic, the ship disappears. You think the real Voyager is going to swoop in and save at least a few, and it misses them. It's an interesting way to deal with the relationship, and refer to it but not have to live with it forever."



McNeill as ship's jack-of-all-trades Lt. Tom Paris. "I end up everywhere," he said. "I'm like the utility man on a baseball team, I play every position."

"Extreme Risk" was one episode where McNeill thought Paris could have been more involved with B'Elanna. He noted, "I wish they had used Paris more in that. I think there was a little bit of fear of getting melodramatic, so rather than let Paris be the one to help B'Elanna deal with these issues, they let Chakotay. I thought that would have been a really nice opportunity to let Paris, as her significant other, be really concerned and pro-active there. Instead, I was off building the Delta Flyer in that episode."

Just as Tim Russ enjoys working with McNeill, McNeill likes the Paris and Tuvok combination. They got together in "Gravity." Said McNeill, "I love working with Tim. One of my favorite combinations, in terms of characters, is Tuvok and Paris. I just think they are hilarious. They are such opposites, and they can dig at each other in such a light, fun way, I think they make a great team. We got to have all the subtle, fun jokes with each other. I thought it was particularly well-written, and I thought our guest star, Lori Petty was great. It was great to be out on location. When you get on location, you feel like you are making a real movie."

There were also a lot of ensemble shows this year, as well as episodes where Paris was called on to help the Doctor. McNeill noted, "Sometimes it gets a little confusing. I'm like the jack-of-all-trades. I can help the Doctor, I can fly the ship, I can do pretty much everything, kind of mediocre, so I end up everywhere. I'm like the utility

man on a baseball team, I play every position."



Garbage dumper Fesek (Ron Canada) on his Malon ship in "Juggernaut," rescued by Voyager after his ship suffers a theta radiation leak.

explode and contaminate a vast region of space with theta radiation, has suffered massive, unexplained system failures. The rest of their crew has died. Fesek (Ron Canada) urges Voyager to get away from the ship, while Pelk (Lee Arenberg) mutters something about an mythical creature that may have emerged from the radiation to wreak havoc.

Janeway is unwilling to let the contamination occur. She sends B'Elanna, Neelix, and Chakotay along with Pelk and Fesek to try and regain control of the ship.

Said Ethan Phillips, "That was a real arduous show to film because it had a lot of smoke, and a lot of grime, and a lot of dark, steamy, filthy places to work, but I think it is going to be a powerful episode."

Dawson was pleased that the episode used the theme of anger, both B'Elanna's anger and the fury of the beast on the Malon ship, throughout the show. She added, "I spent four hours looping tomorrow, because so much of it was done in a way where we couldn't keep the soundtrack and I think that the episode was very well-written and a lot of fun to do."

Ron Canada is best known to TREK viewers as the Klingon Advocate Ch'Pok from DS9's "Rules of Engagement." Lee Arenberg has appeared in multiple episodes of TNG as well as DS9's "The Nagus."

"I have been observing you, as part of my research on human mating behavior."

—Seven of Nine, to B'Elanna Torres and Tom Paris.

SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME ★★★

4/28/99. Production #216. Stardate 52647. Teleplay by Michael Taylor. Story by Brannon Braga. Directed by Robert Duncan McNeill.

Seven of Nine's interest in dating is encouraged by the Doctor. He proposes to help her select an appropriate partner, and teach her proper behavior for dining, dancing and otherwise interacting with a

Awkward at romance, Seven tries to get the hang of lobsters on her date with crewman Jack Lansing in "Someone To Watch Over Me."



member of the opposite sex. He also makes a side bet with Paris that he can teach her successfully. Seven's date with crewman Jack Lansing (Brian McNamara) does not go smoothly, but she is quite comfortable with the Doctor. The Doctor soon finds that he is developing feelings for Seven. Neelix, in the meantime, is trying to prevent the Kadi monk Tomin (Scott Thompson) from eating and drinking his way into a stupor as he investigates Voyager's morality.

This unusual, sweet episode treated viewers to a duet by Jeri Ryan and Robert Picardo, as well as a dance. Pairing the two characters always works well. The B story proved to be a distraction, and the end should have carried more emotional punch.

See "The Making of 'Someone to Watch Over Me,'" page 26.

"Shannon O'Donnell inspired me when I was a girl...I wouldn't have become a Starfleet captain if it wasn't for her." —Captain Janeway

11:59

★★★

5/5/99. Production #217. Stardate unknown. Teleplay by Joe Menosky. Story by Brannon Braga and Joe Menosky. Directed by David Livingston.

Neelix's questions to Captain Janeway about Earth awaken memories of a relative, Shannon O'Donnell, who inspired many Janeways after her, the Captain included. Janeway believes that Shannon was an astronaut who helped build the Millennium Gate in the year 2001. As she tries to collect data, the audience sees the real story of Shannon O'Donnell.



Seven and the Captain view the Millennium Gate on Voyager's viewscreen in "11:59," built in 2001 by Janeway's ancestor Shannon O'Donnell.

In a small Indiana town, during a snowy December in the year 2000, Shannon (played by Kate Mulgrew), a wash-out from the astronaut program, finds herself befriended by Henry Janeway (Kevin Tighe). Janeway, an eccentric bookstore owner, is the lone holdout against the building of the Millennium Gate. Together, Shannon and Henry help each other into the future.

The writers were concerned about the unusual nature of this episode, which was an enjoyable change of pace. Explained Menosky, "Our original inspiration for this was to do an episode where we didn't see Voyager at all. All we saw was Kate Mulgrew playing a distant ancestor. The idea was to tell a quintessentially STAR TREK story without any science fiction. I wrote a teleplay and it was a very painful to write, because our premise wasn't working. We realized that we couldn't tell a story just on Earth without having Voyager to ground us in some way. We ended up doing a third of the episode set on Voyager."

Menosky continued, "Kate really loved playing a character that was not herself. She plays the founder of the Janeway clan, but she's a very reluctant hero, and a very damaged hero. She walks around with her hands in her pockets, and her head slightly bowed. She's a more withdrawn and vulnerable person than you can ever imagine Janeway being. It was quite nice to see her do that

STAR TREK VOYAGER

JOHN SAVAGE, CAPTAIN RANSOM

The star of THE DEER HUNTER on etching an unforgettable portrait of a doomed Starfleet officer.

By Anna Kaplan

John Savage, the actor probably best known for his role in *THE DEER HUNTER* found himself drawn to the small screen and the world of *STAR TREK: VOYAGER*. He was offered the part of the captain of the Starfleet science vessel *Equinox*, for the fifth season cliffhanger. He explained, "I always had a lot of respect for the program, in fact from the beginning. I felt that it had an integrity that most programs don't. They needed a captain. They didn't have a story yet, and I was excited. It evolved, and every day, a new set of pages. I found quite an interesting moral struggle in the story. It wasn't simple, and it was very supported."

Savage accepted the role, and got to work alongside Kate Mulgrew and the rest of the *VOYAGER* cast and crew. He noted, "I don't think people realize how intense the work schedule is, but very professional. A lot of the technical stuff is thrilling, camera work, crane work. The imagination is always there." The director of "Equinox" was *STAR TREK* veteran David Livingston, who said about Savage, "He's great. He is one of the most committed actors I have ever worked with. He just stays right in the trenches." Added *TREK* honcho Rick Berman, "He was terrific. I have been a huge fan of his ever since *DEER HUNTER*. So it was a real kick to have him on the show. He did a great job."

Much of Savage's work was opposite Kate Mulgrew. He said, "Kate is wonderful. We had a couple big scenes, and several scenes together. She should be a director. She's had quite a bit of experience with it, and she was admirable with her focus. I was brought up as an actor, to a higher level, I think, because of the pres-



Savage butts heads with Kate Mulgrew as Janeway, who disapproves of his unethical experiments on aliens, though it could lead to their return to the Alpha Quadrant.

sure and the people around me. I may not have always fulfilled my best desire. I saw some wonderful possibilities and moments, like in the relationship with Captain Janeway, as man and woman, and also as captains, and as people. I just felt like I might have unfortunately overcomplicated myself, and had to be pulled straight by Kate. I didn't have to be. She was generous. I think she is a very, very generous woman, as an actress, it ain't easy. She has the ability to be very sensitive to where other people are. At the same time, she can pull things together real quick and be strong, and funny. It was a good experience. It's like working with Shakespeare. It can be touchy, not just for the words, but for the meaning. Simple is best. But we both had a lot of stuff going on."

Savage enjoyed the original *STAR TREK* series and its more recent incarnations. He explained, "I love the idea of telling stories by way of metaphor or fantasy. It gives the audience more respect, and more of an opportunity for imagina-

tion. You're trying to make a moral stand. You are watching conflicts and drama that work out moral issues. The idea of aliens, and different kinds of people, and all that, I just love it. I think we are all children at heart, if we are careful not to forget that. We can get an awful lot from the script. The scripts and the stories usually go full circle. A lot of stories start and end right in the same place. I like the way they go into a little more depth."

Savage continued, "I have a grandson, and he collects those little [*STAR TREK*] figures. He created his own little world with them. It means a lot to me and to him. I wish there were more shows of that integrity for young people."

Savage most recently appeared in the feature films *SUMMER OF SAM*, *MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE* and *THE THIN RED LINE*, as well as the telefilm *THE JACK BULL*. After his experience filming the first part of "Equinox," Savage was ready for more *VOYAGER*. He said, "I had desires to think along lines like we all do when we get involved and get close to people. I was hoping maybe they can even make our ship an outlaw ship of some kind, keep us going. I asked, 'Please don't kill us off.' The issue that we are dealing with is a tough one. However it goes, I'll be happy. I wish we could do more."

David Livingston said about Savage at the end of season five, "I think he wants to become a series regular. He enjoyed it so much. Noted co-scripter Joe Menosky, "Characters will either have to meet their tragic doom or they will be redeemed. A couple are too far gone." Captain Ransom, unfortunately for John Savage, was one of the characters too far gone. He met his demise at the end of "Equinox Part II," but died a hero. □

performance. David Livingston, who is a marvelous director, did it on the New York Street on Paramount lot. They brought in tons and tons of snow and blew it all over the street."

Noted Livingston, "What's wonderful in it is that Kate plays a totally different character. She plays this woman who had wanted to become an astronaut and had washed out, and she's been a loner. This is a story about her redeeming her life, connecting again with people, and reestablishing herself and her identity. It's a wonderful character study. We cut back and forth between Janeway and Shannon, and you get to see this wonderful contrast between these two. The production values were great. We shot it on the backlot at Paramount, and made it look like a Midwestern city. It was supposed to be in the winter, and we had snow, and we shot both day and night. We had this wonderful bookstore, where she goes to visit this guy named Janeway, who she obviously ends up marrying. The bookstore interior was phenomenal, one of Richard James' best sets."

Livingston continued, "The story is really intriguing, and it is the only STAR TREK show that I know of that has no science fiction. It is not a STAR TREK show. I hope that the audience and the fans will be intrigued by it. This story is purely this character study of this woman and how she is finding her way again. You see her as an 80-year-old woman at the end, and the makeup looks wonderful on her. Kate said when she looked in the mirror it scared her, because she looked so much like her grandmother."

Braga added, "We wanted to do a show dealing with the millennium, before the millennium came. We wanted to tell a story of Captain Janeway's great, great, great, great, great grandmother, played by Kate Mulgrew. At the same time, we tell a little story with the real Captain Janeway talking about this relative. We see how what Captain Janeway thinks happened was very different from what happened. It's a story about history, and how history can be misinterpreted. Ultimately, it's a very unique off-concept episode. It's a real acting tour de force for Kate Mulgrew."

Menosky concluded, "Ultimately, to me, it was a lot of domestic scenes, which I am not interested in writing. Our original inspiration for it was to do it without the hard science fiction, but more than anyone, I wish that we had had something of that element in to drive the plot. Rick Berman called to say he loved it. I just kind of shrugged. You just never know."

"Your captain has a knack for sticking her nose where it doesn't belong, especially when it comes to time travel."

—Captain Braxton to Seven of Nine

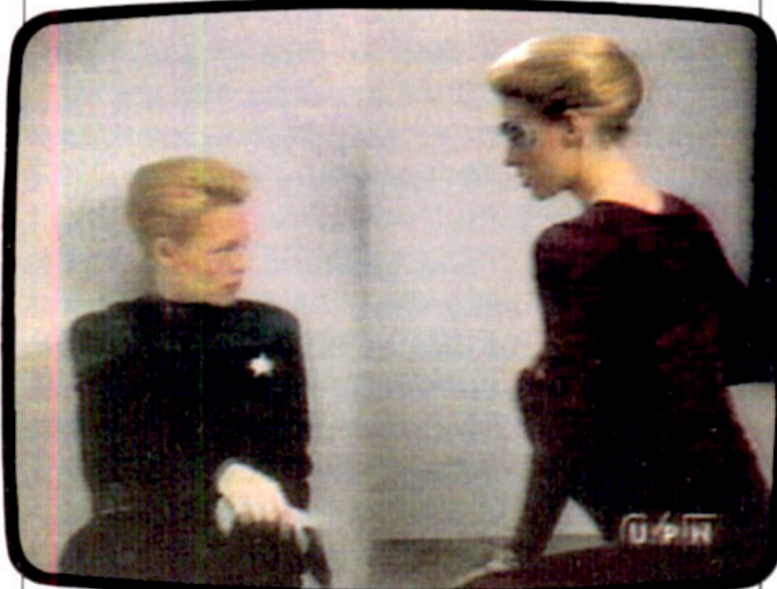
RELATIVITY

★★★★1/2

5/12/99. Stardate 52861.274 (among others). Production #218. Teleplay by Bryan Fuller, Nick Sagan, and Michael Taylor. Story by Nick Sagan. Directed by Allan Eastman.

Seven of Nine is recruited by Captain Braxton

Seven meets herself on Voyager in "Relativity," after being recruited as a time-travel agent by a Federation Timeship from the 29th century.



The Doctor becomes a "bomb" when a sentient "Warhead" takes over his portable emitter in an attempt to fulfill its mission and reach its target.

(Bruce McGill) of the Federation Timeship Relativity from the 29th century. A saboteur has placed a temporal weapon on Voyager, which will destroy it and fracture space-time unless Seven can stop it. Disguised as a Starfleet ensign, Seven is sent back to different times in Voyager's past, because she can see the weapon with her ocular implant. Multiple attempts fail, and Seven accidentally meets Janeway, also leaving behind a .003 chroniton flux that Janeway never forgets. Even after Seven dies during one attempt, Braxton continues to re-recruit her, exposing her to the risk of temporal psychosis from multiple time jumps.

This delightful romp affords the audience a view of the Utopia Planitia shipyards above Mars, a meeting between Seven and Lieutenant Carey (Josh Clark), an early peek at a very cranky EMH, and Janeway first boarding Voyager. Eventually, with Janeway's assistance, Seven finds the saboteur and restores the timeline.

Captain Braxton was first seen in VOYAGER's third season two-part "Future's End," but was played by Allan Royal. Braxton's opinions of Captain Janeway were formed during this interaction. Lieutenant Carey was last seen in the first season episode "State of Flux." Visual effects supervisor Ronald B. Moore and his team created the Utopia Planitia shipyards for this episode.

Braga, who did a lot of rewriting on the episode explained, "'Relativity' is a time travel romp. It's an incredibly fast-paced, mind-bending, fun, time travel story. [The identity of the bomber] will be a real shocker."

"Chakotay lets me make a command decision. What do I do? I beam a talking bomb on board."

—Harry Kim

WARHEAD

★★★

5/19/99. Production #219. Stardate unknown. Teleplay by Michael Taylor and Ken Biller. Story by Brannon Braga. Directed by John Kretchmer.

On Harry Kim's command shift, Voyager gets an automated distress call. Changing course, they reach the planet from which the call came. Kim takes down an away team along with the Doctor. They find an apparently sentient machine, stuck in rock, sending a distress signal. The Doctor is the only one that can understand it's duotronic algorithms. He convinces Harry that despite the risk it is their moral obligation to help this distressed machine. Once the machine is on board, the crew uses a variety of means to determine its purpose. They take it to sick bay to try and repair its damaged memory. But Seven and the Captain discover traces of a similar machine in a blast crater on the planet. The artificial intelligence is a weapon, a "smart bomb" in literal terms.

Explained Braga, "It's a post-Cold War analogy in some ways. I was watching FRONTLINE on PBS, and they did this story on the Russian arsenal of nuclear warheads, and how they are basically up for grabs. Anything could happen to these damn things. They could be launched accidentally, they could be sold on the black market, and that's what spawned the

idea. It's a tour de force for Bob Picardo, because he gets to play the bomb. The bomb transfers itself, its neural matrix, into the holomatrix, and Bob takes on the persona of the bomb."

"It's never easy, but if we turn our back on our principles, we stop being human."

—Captain Janeway

EQUINOX

★★★★1/2

5/26/99. Production #220. Stardate unknown. Teleplay by Brannon Braga and Joe Menosky. Story by Rick Berman, Brannon Braga and Joe Menosky. Directed by David Livingston.

A heavily damaged Federation vessel is under attack by unknown aliens, who open spatial vortices inside the ship and kill on contact. Voyager receives a distress call from the ship, the U.S.S. Equinox, a science vessel also apparently lost in the Delta Quadrant. Only four crew members have survived the attack, Captain John Ransom (John Savage), Lessing (Rick Worthy), Gilmore (Olivia Birkelund), and Burke (Titus Welliver) who is an old boyfriend of B'Elanna's. They say the creatures have been attacking for months. They are obviously in poor psychological and medical condition.

As Captain Janeway and crew try and plan a strategy to repel the next alien attack and salvage the Equinox, Captain Ransom has other ideas. Janeway becomes increasingly suspicious. She sends the Doctor over to their medical lab which the Equinox crew themselves have flooded with thermionic radiation. Here the Doctor discovers evidence that the Equinox crew has trapped, killed, and performed tests on the aliens, whose tissues they then converted to an energy source.



Voyager receives a distress call from the U.S.S. "Equinox," a damaged Federation vessel under attack and also stranded in the Delta Quadrant.

Ransom plans to steal Voyager's new technology which will allow him to trap even more aliens, giving him a fuel source to get all the way back to the Alpha Quadrant. Janeway catches him. His story of accidentally discovering this source of energy does not soften her opinion. She relieves him of rank and confines all four to quarters. She sends Seven and the Doctor back to the Equinox to download data. In the lab, the Equinox's own EMH comes online. This EMH had his ethical subroutines removed by his crew, and designed the gruesome experiments himself. He steals the Doctor's portable emitter and goes back to Voyager. He frees his own crew, and they steal Voyager's technology. Seven and the Doctor are trapped on the Equinox as it speeds away. The other EMH is presumably still on Voyager. The creatures attack Voyager, which has lost its planned defense, and as the episode ends, one of the creatures is heading toward the Captain.

Trivia note: Rick Worthy appeared as the robot in VOYAGER's "Prototype," as well as playing a Klingon in DS9's "Soldiers of the Empire."

For more about this excellent cliff-hanger, see "The Making of "Equinox,"" page 46 and the sidebar "John Savage," left.

PITCH BLACK

By Joe Fordham

November 1998 was the month when director David Twohy and his editor, Rick Shaine, locked the two hundred shots that will deliver the visual effect jolts for Polygram/Interscope's new science fiction thriller, *PITCH BLACK*, which USA Films opened nationwide February 18. Once this task was completed, the digital compositing and computer generated imagery—supervised by British effects maestro Peter Chiang, from designs by Patrick *GODZILLA* Tatopoulos (see preview 31:10:6)—will be blended with live-action plates. After four months location shooting in the wilds of the Australian outback, Twohy was relaxed and happy to recount the journey that had brought him to this stage of production in his latest foray into the genre.

“What appealed to me most about the premise was that it could tap in so easily into our innate fear of the dark,” he said. “You crash land on the planet that you believe has no night. No life and no night. Then you come to realize that there is one nightfall every 23 years on this planet and you have the unlucky coincidence of being there when that is about to happen. Then when night does fall you realize it's not a dead planet at all, it's rife with nocturnal life, and that nocturnal life happens to be inhospitable to humankind. It was a film that could be powered a lot by imagination, if the filmmakers so chose.”

Twohy's background as screenwriter for both science fiction—*WATERWORLD*, *THE ARRIVAL*—and action-oriented drama—*G.I. JANE*, *THE FUGITIVE*—appealed to the studio. *PITCH BLACK* may have had the trappings of science fiction, but they wanted a horror film. “They made it very

Writer-director David Twohy on his sci-fi creature feature.



Twohy rehearses Vin Diesel, a convict with enhanced night vision, loosed on a planet that is plunged into darkness just once every twenty-three years.

clear that it had to [be horror], to make sense to them commercially. I heard their concerns early on and I built additional jumps into my early rewrites, but I think that's just smart marketing sense because I want people to see my film as well. I did that without sacrificing the other things I like about the script as well. The other human things.

“I realized that it was a great vehicle for exploring the basis of fear, why we fear the things we do; and for exploring who is really the hero of our piece. The curious thing is it's not who you expect. It's not one of those Bruce Willis movies where you clearly know he's the good guy,

you know he's going to prevail and you only stick around to find out how. It's not that at all. At the beginning, you think you know who the hero is, you think you know where your allegiances should lie, but then about half way through you start to wonder if in fact your allegiances aren't misplaced. Suddenly who you thought was the hero is not the hero, and someone you thought was the bad guy is not the bad guy. Suddenly, hopefully, everything is fresh and new and continues to be involving up until the very last moment.”

Casting proved a major factor in Twohy's design, though budgetary factors triggered the

equation. “It was part of a plan that developed for us,” Twohy confided. “The fact that Polygram would only spend a certain amount of money on a picture like this—they wanted low-twenties, we wound up mid-twenties—given that budgetary range, you can't go out and get somebody of worldwide marquee value to power your movie. So we said to them, let's not try middle-echelon actors who have dubious marketing appeal anyway, [let's] just take that extra money and try to make a better movie. Let us cast with best available talent. Ultimately, Interscope, Tom and myself were able to prevail upon Polygram to do just that.”

As *PITCH BLACK* took shape, the filmmakers continued to turn monetary constraints to their artistic advantage. The three leads in the ensemble cast, Radha Mitchell, Vin Diesel, Cole Hauser all impressed themselves on Twohy as valuable assets—“They are all good up-and-comers and any of them could break maybe with this film.” The same approach was applied to production design (by Graham Walker of *MAD MAX II* and *MAD MAX III*)—“It's science fiction that doesn't try to impress with technology. We didn't have the money to compete with *LOST IN SPACE* or *STARSHIP TROOPERS*. Those were clean, techy looks at the future. We are not that. We are almost retro-tech, we are dirty, we are ugly, we are sloppy, we are handheld. Hopefully more effective for it.”

The Australian shoot was as demanding for Twohy as it was for the rest of his cast and crew. Twohy reflected on the ordeal, “Well, they do speak the same language—sort of,” he laughed. “But they have world-class crews down there, and I had a very good d.p., David Egby.



Diesel becomes the unlikely savior for a crashed transport ship once nightfall comes, as the crew discovers the planet is not as uninhabited as it looks.

We were in the Australian outback, in their winter, which meant very, very short days. All of us were used to 14-hour filming days and suddenly we had eight hours. Since it was a planet where there's supposed to be no night, as soon as the sun was going down that was it."

Short days pushed them one week over schedule. Further complications arose over the evolution of the alien creatures, a process that continued even after principal photography had wrapped. "About 20% of our creature were practical shots, about 80% will be CG. Patrick [Tatopoulos] and I came up with a creature [design] that we were quite happy with. We fabricated that creature halfway through production and Polygram started to get cold feet, wondering if in fact the creature was scary enough. We looked at minor modifications that might help

allay their fears, even though I had no fears all along. Scary is such a subjective thing."

Twohy enthused at Tatopoulos' involvement, "Patrick helped us come up with some of the landscapes. One of the great shots from the movie is when our humans are out trekking they come to a valley filled with titanic, dinosaurian bones. He

Space transport captain Cole Hauser hunts Diesel until the PITCH BLACK of the planet's night turns the tables. USA Films opens the movie February 18.



"We didn't have money to compete with STARSHIP TROOPERS," said Twohy. "We are almost retro-tech, we are dirty, we are ugly, we are sloppy, we are hand-held."

[designed] those creatures, what they once were. It turns out to be a killing field, which is the first tip-off that maybe we're not alone on this planet."

PITCH BLACK marks Twohy's second theatrical feature as a director, although his genre credentials extend as far back as WARLOCK, his first produced screenplay. A California native, graduate of CSULB, Twohy remarked on his current association with science fiction, "I'm happy to work in the genre. I pursue it, as much as anything. I sucked up a lot of it as I was growing up, as a lot of us do, but I'm happy to work in the genre now as long as I can do it every other film. Whenever I go away and do a drama then come back and do science fiction, it feels like coming home."

Twohy was non-committal when it came to predictions about the current science fiction boom. "I think a lot of the good science fiction concepts from the fifties have already been plundered or exploited as films. I actually turned one of my favorites into the first thing that I directed about six years ago. It was called THE GRAND TOUR, based on "Vintage Season" by Henry Kuttner. It was about a bunch of time-travelling tourists who

were on a tour of the great disasters of all time. A very interesting concept. I optioned the material, wrote a screenplay, filmed it and turned it into a Showtime original movie. It turned out fairly well, I thought. Jeff Daniels was in it—So I've gone that route myself; but if you look at classic science fiction a lot of it has been used.

"I think we're going to have to start generating anew. Probably the breakthrough films [will be] those that start combining genres, like ALIENS because it was both an action film and a horror film and succeeded on both levels. We're probably going to have to up the stakes by crossing genres and doing both well rather than both not well." Which hopefully is where PITCH BLACK fits in.

Twohy stressed, "PITCH BLACK is a scary movie. That's what it'll be marketed as. But I think that once we get the people in theatres they'll find a lot more than just that. In terms of the science fiction, in terms of the drama, in terms of the unpredictability of the story.

"The first goal of all filmmakers is that we should be entertaining and not boring; the second goal is they walk out of the theatre saying, 'You know what? I didn't know how it was going to end.' So often I go into a movie theatre and, like a lot of us, I can call the end of the movie 15 minutes into it. If you know what the ending of a movie is, why the heck are you spending eight dollars, and why the heck are you sitting around for two hours? I always try to do the unexpected and I think this film has a lot of that." □

**More PITCH BLACK, on 58
Star Vin Diesel
Special Visual Effects**

PITCH BLACK

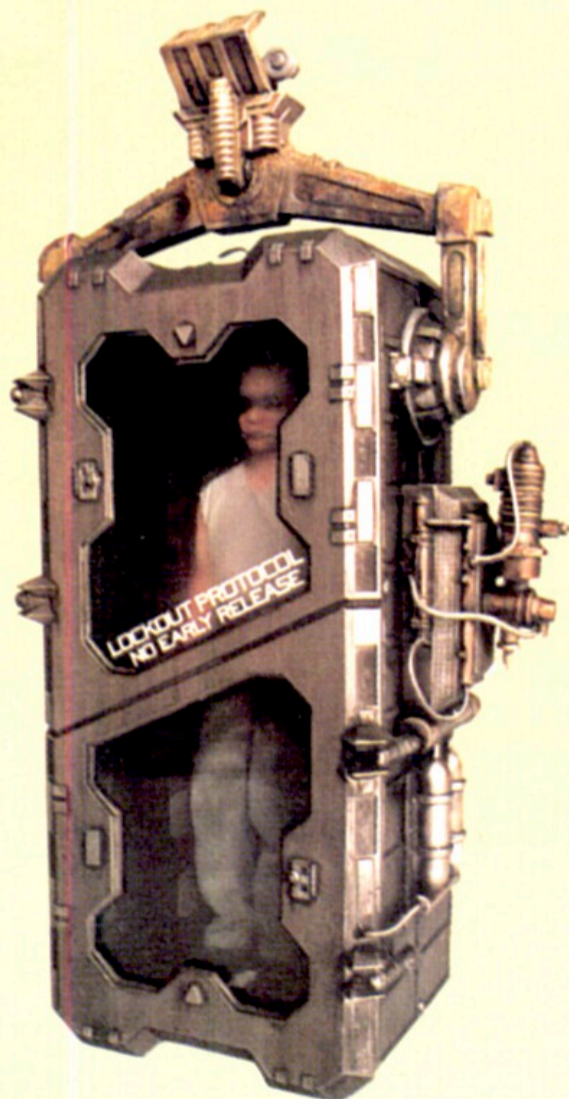
MINIATURE EFFECTS

*The space freighter crash
by Hunter-Gratzner.*

By Joe Fordham

Ian Hunter and Matthew Gratzner were already Twohy alumni after creating miniature effects for *THE ARRIVAL* in 1995, their first year in production as Hunter-Gratzner Industries, Inc. Their eight-foot-high, 1/24th-scale Planetcore building and its resident unfolding space antenna have since been followed by bug-blasting weaponry for *MEN IN BLACK*; a

1:6 scale CryoLocker miniature with Vin Diesel puppet inside, for gripping interior shots of the crash action.



looming, 1/24th scale Arkham Asylum for *BATMAN AND ROBIN*; shiny, Bradburyian rocketships for *GATTACA*; grungy, high-tech space vehicles for *ALIEN RESURRECTION*; and untold havoc in *GODZILLA*, *ARMAGEDDON*, and *THE X-FILES MOVIE*. All this and more outlandish hardware for Will Smith—this time in a Jules Verne vein for *WILD, WILD WEST*—brought HGI back to David Twohy's employ in the summer of 1998, hired to realize the crash of a space freighter at the film's outset.

The design process began as always from the language of the script, but HGI were aware of genre precedents involved and strove to combine imagination and originality with a practical, believable approach. "Whenever Ian and I approach any script, we never reference other films," said Gratzner. "We always like to base our designs on something real, not on someone else's interpretation. David kept referring to this ship as part of a freight line, so we took a look at shipping docks, like San Pedro down here in California and around the east coast. We saw it's just container after container after container being picked up with a crane and loaded onto ships. We also thought of freight trains, with a caboose at the back and an engine in the front, then we took these theories and applied them to deep space."

The dirty, gritty approach



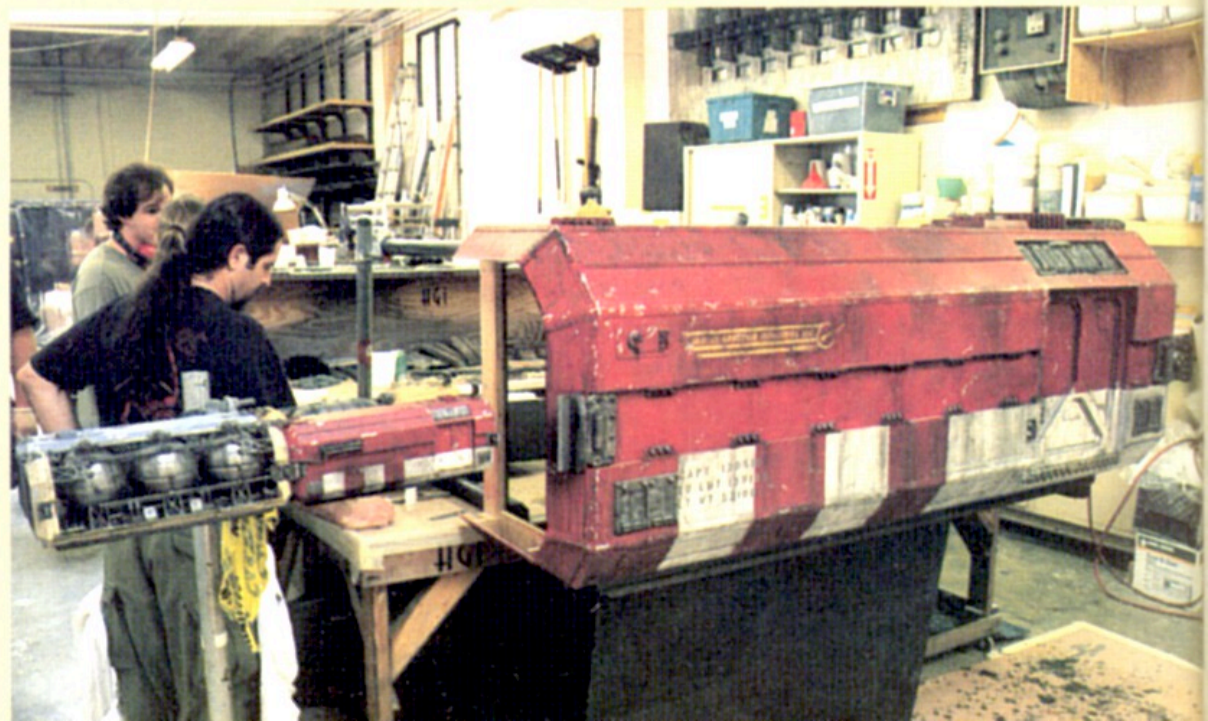
Assistant painter Laurah Grijalva details the 1:36 scale model of the space freighter, big scale effects on a small scale by Hunter-Gratzner Industries.

was also carried over to the ship's interior in the form of the cryo-locker design, an HGI concept which consciously departed from *ALIEN*'s gleaming, flower-petal sleep chamber in favor of a disturbing, utilitarian approach. "Imagine some company that does cryo-freezing buys a number of these freight containers from the manufacturer and they just adapt them for cryo-travel," Gratzner proposed. "We decided they'd just fit rails to the inside of the containers and then take these coffin-like sarcophagus units, with big gauges, valves and hoses on

the outside, and then just hook them onto the rail, sliding them into the container, unfortunately a lot like sides of beef."

This nightmarishly practical approach to economy-class space travel also proved a means of intensifying the action and containing the effects budget. "David didn't want to show the crash from the outside because, frankly, to do a shot like that would have been quite costly, and they didn't really have the budget to do it," said Gratzner. "The flip side was David felt it's been seen a million times, so he decided to

1:36 scale and 1:6 scale miniatures of the freighter's cargo container section, side by side. Shooting the crash action in miniature was a budget necessity.



keep the action inside. We built a 1/6th scale interior cryo-locker set that featured all these cryo-lockers on rails. When the wall gets ripped out, debris goes flying and all the cryo-lockers start rolling down the rails and shooting out as well. The script just stated cryo-lockers start flying out of the containers, but that gave us the idea to have them on these huge great clamps sliding down the rails with all their cryo-hoses and lifelines getting severed. It was a pretty good shot."

Conceptual sketches were followed by an 18" mock-up of the main ship, roughed out in urethane foam, detailed and painted over a period of three days for the director and studio's approval in May '98. It was determined a nine-foot-long, 1/36th-scale model would be constructed to represent the full ship with 1/6th scale close-up sections; but before construction could begin Twohy had important news for HGI.

"David mentioned we had a production designer," Gratzner recalled, "a gentleman by the name of Grace Walker in Australia. I was very familiar with Grace's films, ROAD WARRIOR, BEYOND THUNDER-DOME, and I knew he was a very well-established, precedent-setting designer who has been copied all over, so I thought this was terrible—he was going to come in and hate everything! At our initial meeting I explained our concept, showed Grace our drawings and said I pictured the inside of the spaceship like a T-130 military cargo plane, a lot of wires, frame work and padding. I was talking a mile a minute. Well, he loved it! He told me it was what he'd pictured too, like a big cargo jet—I think he actually said a T-130—and that was my first and last nervous doubt on the show."

A constant interface continued between HGI and Walker's art department on location in Australia, with photographs and castings being despatched to Coober Peedy to aid construction of full scale set pieces upon which actors could scramble. "Grace built the front half of our ship buried in the sand and it was phenomenal," Gratzner recalled. "It matched our model exactly, almost to the bolt." □

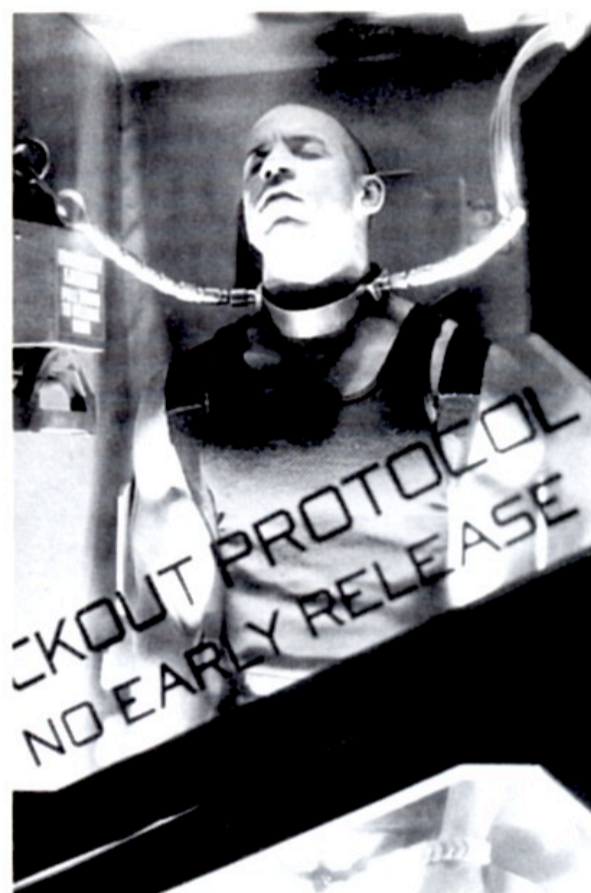
VIN DIESEL

Rising star and sci-fi fan on his cross between Mad Max and the Terminator.

While the first member of Tom Hanks' PRIVATE RYAN rescue squad was being gunned down on screens across the States in the summer of 1998, Vin Diesel, the performer who brought Private Caparzo to life as his Hollywood debut, was pulling 14-hour days, light years away, on location in Coober Peedy, Australia, in his role as Riddick, the main male lead of PITCH BLACK. "It was tough," Diesel admitted. "I wish I could've been part of that premiere." But the RYAN adventure was undoubtedly one that Diesel valued—he referred to his time with Spielberg as "probably one of the most rewarding and validating experiences of my life"—and it has made the young New Yorker one of the hottest and distinctive new names in town.

Diesel earned his stripes in Hanks' platoon on the strengths of his self-produced 1994 short MULTIFACIAL. The 20-minute film caught Spielberg's eye after its appearance at Cannes in 1995. What attracted Diesel to PITCH BLACK was the script by David Twohy. "He was probably one of the best written characters that I've read in years," said Diesel. "The character arc was amazing. He was a prototype in many ways because he's like a Terminator, but he had elements of Hannibal Lecter, elements of a vampire, elements of an Elia Kazan-created character, all these different, wonderful dimensions. The story starts out where nobody trusts him and then at the end of the film this guy you've feared all along is perceived totally different."

Twohy's script kept Riddick's background deliberately sketchy, as it did with all the characters, yet what little it provided set the roots for his transformation and distinguished him from the group. "I don't have a fear of the dark," Diesel explained. "Actu-



Diesel as Riddick, a dangerous convict in cryosleep prior to the crash, wish fulfillment for a boy who wanted to be a superhero.

ally, Riddick is more comfortable in the dark. He's got nocturnal vision. He has spent so much time in prison that he is actually more intimidated by the sunlight. It's not as bad as Gollum in LORD OF THE RINGS but he's got that kind of Ring Wraith feel. He's a nocturnal beast. So when nighttime comes, that's when he shines.

"I did a lot of interesting things in creating Riddick's character. I studied the movement of Apex predators. He also wears protective goggles because his eyes are sensitive to light, so I had to rely on body language, the tone and pitch of my voice. What helped was I'd done an animated film called THE IRON GIANT, where I played the Giant. When you do a character in an animated film that's all you've got, your voice. You have to try to bring something out from inside and put that out there without using your eyes which are the actor's number one tool."

Other peculiarities of genre filmmaking were also new to Diesel, and initially daunting.

"Fighting creatures that are not there is something that you have to do to create these characters and tell the story. It was a little weird. I actually feared the idea of working with green screen more than I probably needed to. After the tenth take you forget the fact that you've got this green curtain hanging behind you and you can't move an inch out of the designated direction."

Technicalities aside, Diesel confessed this project was a boyhood dream come true. "I grew up with Moorcock and Tolkein. I was playing Dungeons and Dragons at 12 and religiously altering the game until we took it to a master's level. Literally, if you would've asked the five-year-old Vin Diesel what he wanted to be when he grew up, he would have said a superhero."

Diesel gave his distinctive, big, cackling laugh. "That's what was so cool. I always wanted to be The Terminator. Riddick is the 1998 version of that Terminator character. The bad hero dude! He's Mad Max and Terminator!"

Speaking of his career ambitions, Diesel also referenced a couple of real-life heroes, "I think Nicolas Cage has a wonderful career. He's able to do THE ROCK and he's able to do LEAVING LAS VEGAS. I could probably end up filling that Arnold/Stallone void, but I'd like to compound that with dramatic pieces. That's what all my training has built up to." And in terms of his filmmaking pursuits, "I admire Mel Gibson's career. I'll be able to do a lot more directing when I'm older. Right now I have to use this window of opportunity and be strategic about my business to put people in seats. I still write and, god knows, I still direct, but the more immediate thing right now is the acting."

Joe Fordham

THE RETURN OF ROMAN POLANSKI

The director of ROSEMARY'S BABY and REPULSION on his stylish genre comeback.

By Presley Reese

An infamous 17th-century satanic manual transforms a mercenary hireling into a dark knight on a supernatural quest in *THE NINTH GATE*, a return to form for renowned filmmaker Roman Polanski, his 16th feature as director. *THE NINTH GATE* stars Johnny Depp as a smooth-talking rare book expert, unexpectedly confronted with the ultimate temptation. Artisan opens Polanski's horror gem March 31.

Polanski was looking for a return to his horror roots in Enrique Urbizu's screenplay for *THE NINTH GATE*, adapted from Arturo Perez-Reverte's 1993 bestseller, *The Club Dumas*. Polanski recognized the script as being "up my alley. Devils and vampires and such make great tales." Reading the original novel, he immediately felt it was a film he wanted to make, one that would "satisfy my appetite for films that do not yet exist."

It was also while reading the novel that Polanski thought of Depp for the central role of Dean Corso. "When you read, you see in your mind's eye the characters that are in the book. And I realized very soon that this character was very close to what Johnny looks like—his smile, his charm and his wickedness sometimes—combined, that's what Corso is in the book."

Depp's understated portrayal of Corso underscores the profound, subterranean transforma-



Frank Langella in *THE NINTH GATE*, the owner of one of Europe's largest collections of demonic texts, in Polanski's first film since 1994's *DEATH AND THE MAIDEN*.

tion of the character from indifferent cynic to passionate seeker. "The way he played it, very straight, gave an unexpected color to Corso," said Polanski. "I imagined the character slightly differently. Johnny made him straighter, but it always sounds right when he says a line. It never sounds phony."

Polanski was also impressed with the intuitive understanding Depp brought to his work. "Some actors you have to be very concrete with, and explain everything to get it right. With Johnny, there's very little need to talk. His approach is instinctual."

Barbara Jefford is a standout in the fine cast as Baroness Kessler, a German aristocrat in a motorized wheelchair who remembers seeing the devil at the age of 15, describing the experience as "love at first sight." The British Jefford was a late addition to the cast. "The first ac-

tress that we signed had pneumonia, so we frantically started looking for someone else," recalled Polanski. "We hired a theatrical German actress, quite old, and she had great problems in learning the lines; although she does a lot of stage work, she does it in German and to learn all those pages in English proved to be impossible."

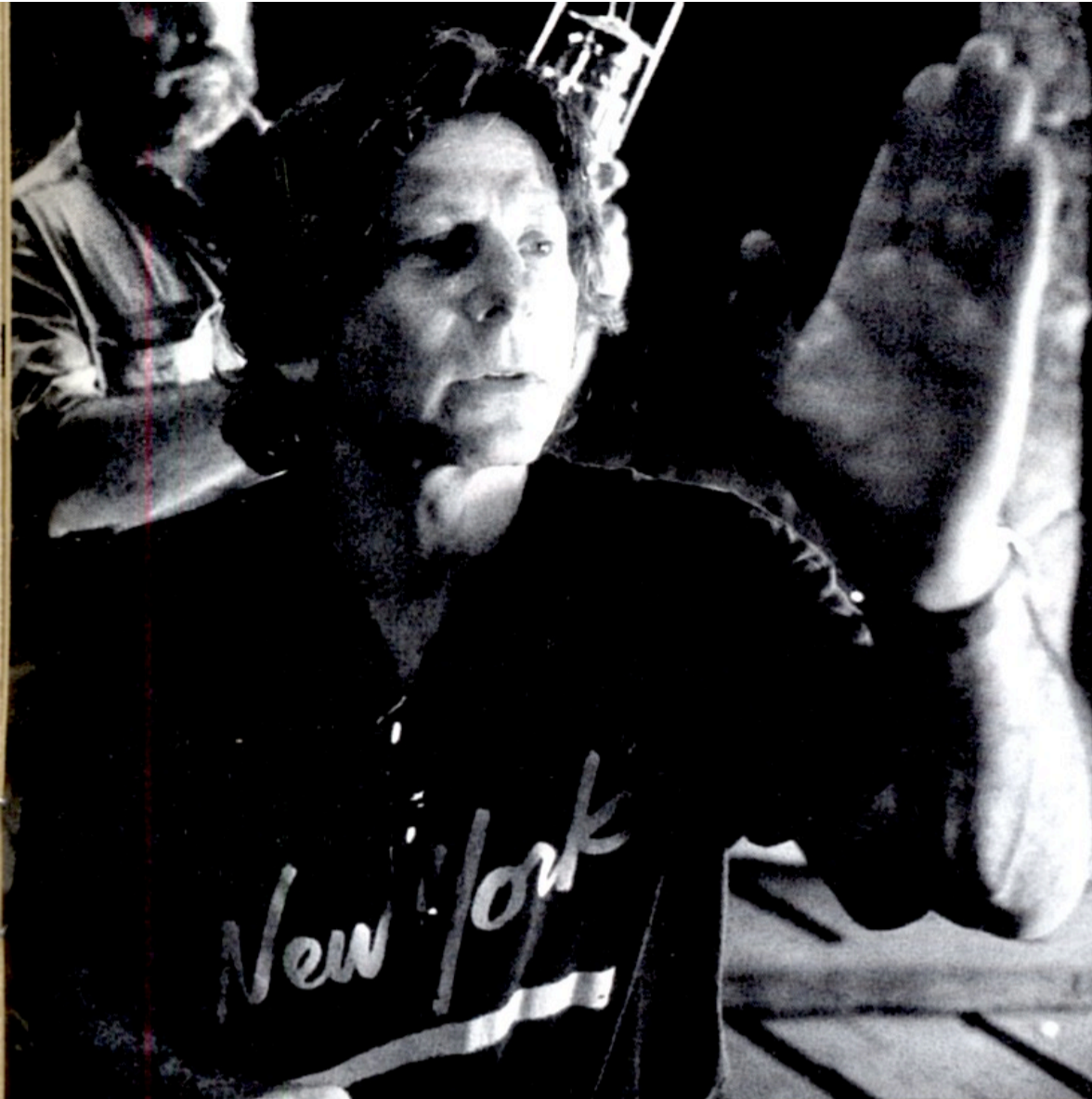
"We found ourselves stuck, it was just a few days before the scene was to shoot, and we could not delay it. In a panic, I rang my casting director in London and she suggested Barbara Jefford. And I just pleaded with her to come and do the part. She said, 'How can I learn so much text over the weekend?' But she did, and I have a German assistant who sat down with her to work on that German accent. And she learned it literally in three days. I must say, only a British actress with the disci-

pline and experience that they have could do this type of feat. And her accent...I work a lot in Germany and Austria, and it sounds so right!"

Polanski brought in script collaborator John Brownjohn, who recalled that he and Polanski had a marvelous time developing the film's characters, and that no small amount of sardonic chuckles arose as their ultimate fates were discussed. "We would talk about strangulation and the Baroness' wheelchair and such," said Brownjohn. "Roman was already imagining it all and, I can tell you, he hasn't lost his particular sense of humor."

The nine engravings signed "LCF," divided equally among the three copies of "The Nine Gates" make up a riddle that, when solved, conjures the Devil and unlock the entrance to his domain. Giving that riddle cinematic resonance was a challenge Polanski eagerly embraced. "One thing that attracted me very much to the story was the idea of putting together a puzzle on the screen throughout a feature movie," he said. "I somehow thought of a little moment in *ROSEMARY'S BABY*, when Rosemary uses the Scrabble board to figure out an anagram and it spells out in front of her eyes. I saw that I could get this type of atmosphere by putting the engravings together."

Eventually Corso gathers the tools he needs to unlock the ninth and final gate, and discover its truth. "That sort of Faust-



Polanski directs *THE NINTH GATE* which Artisan opens March 31. Noted the Polish director in exile in Paris, "Devils and vampires make such great tales."

ian theme exists in many cultures and places," said Polanski. "It's man's dream to be next to the god, if not to be the god itself, and to be able to command anything his mind dictates, to fulfill all his desires. That's what the devil is supposed to give you for your soul."

Nonetheless, Polanski emphasized that *THE NINTH GATE* is about entertainment, not myth. "I'm interested in making the story work and creating an atmosphere, creating suspense. I'm much more interested in making people in the audience laugh or feel scared, than in analyzing it all."

The cast also includes Academy Award nominee Lena Olin and the Tony Award-winning Frank Langella as the suavely evil Boris Balkan. Polanski greatly admired Langella's performance as Clare Quilty in Adrian Lyne's *LOLITA*. "He's got a fabulous voice," Polanski said of Langella. "That was extremely important because his character exists over a phone line. He's at the beginning and the end. For the rest, we just feel his presence over the telephone, so the voice had to be impressive and commanding. And he's got that."

Langella found the veteran Polanski to be an inspired and inspiring presence. "You'd see it every day on the set, his great,

great passion. There isn't a cynical bone in his body about making a movie; he's a child still, in the best sense of the word."

The actor also appreciated the story's unusual milieu. "I thought, what a wonderful way to tie in a thriller with a subject you don't much see: people who collect rare books and first editions. People who believe that in those first editions are clues, possibly of the occult."

Jose Lopez Rodero makes his acting debut in the film as the diabolical twin Ceniza brothers. Rodero is a veteran of the Spanish film industry who began his career as an assistant director for such filmmakers as Stanley Kubrick, Joseph Mankiewicz, and Nicholas Ray. He had never set foot in front of the camera prior to *THE NINTH GATE*, and Polanski did not have an easy time persuading him to try it. "I could not find a Spanish actor that would be good enough and speak English well enough. I was desperately going through masses of tapes from casting sessions, and I started thinking more and more seriously of Jose, our Spanish production manager, who speaks very good English and has a very funny face. And when finally I told him that I wanted him to play the part, he ran out of the room. I had to catch him! I had to work on him

continued on page 62

THE NINTH GATE

A triumphant return to horror films for Polanski.

By Alan Jones

After decades of compulsively avoiding the genre in which he scored with such classics as *REPULSION*, *DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES* and *ROSEMARY'S BABY*, Roman Polanski makes a triumphant return to horror with this marvelously rich and satisfying Gothic chiller. All memory of his past arty and pretentious career aberrations with the likes of *PIRATES*, *FRANTIC*, *BITTER MOON* and *DEATH AND THE MAIDEN* are instantly erased by *THE NINTH GATE* which is easily Polanski's finest movie since *THE TENANT* in 1976.

Revealing the French-based, Polish-Jewish director in firm control of his marvelously intense material, it's a particular joy to note he's lost none of the macabre obsessiveness, razor-sharp irony or sardonic wit that cleverly shaded his earlier genre masterpieces. It's all here in this Satanic detective story tangentially expanded in every area of finely tuned terror from the all-time Continental best-selling book *El Club Dumas* by Arturo Perez-Reverte: the dangerous emotional games of *KNIFE IN THE WATER*; the destruction of a well-ordered life as first glimpsed in *CUL-DE-SAC*; the rare intelligence of *REPULSION*; the subtle suspense tricks and thoughtfully shattering climax as exemplified by *ROSEMARY'S BABY*. And in the same way he infused *DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES* with a cheeky Hammer sensibility, *THE NINTH GATE* res-

onates with nods to that House of Horror's quintessential demonic epic *THE DEVIL RIDES OUT*.

Already an enormous hit in Europe, *THE NINTH GATE* is intensely gripping from the moment the dreamy gate credits open one after another ushering the viewer into a world of deepening mystery and growing discomfort. Here's a disturbing thriller set in the threatening world of black magic that both satisfies the intellect and haunts the memory with one gorgeously composed wide screen shot (by Dariusz Khondji) after another. The premise is both

continued on page 62

Polanski rehearses Johnny Depp as a rare book expert corrupted in his search for the Satanic text of the title.

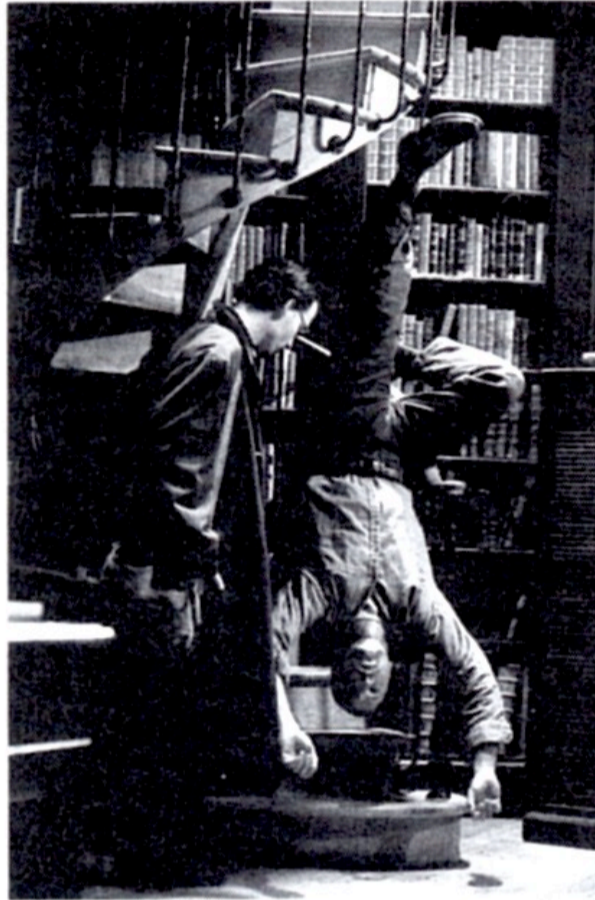


intriguing and menacing; multi-millionaire Manhattan rare books collector Boris Balkan (Frank Langella) hires loner expert Dean Corso (Johnny Depp) to authenticate his priceless copy of *The Nine Gates of the Kingdom of Shadows*, an ancient tome supposedly written in conjunction with Lucifer himself.

Two other copies of the same work are held by Victor Fargas (Jack Taylor) in Portugal and by Baroness Kessler (Barbara Jefford) in Paris so Corso heads to Europe and inveigles his way into both owners' confidences to compare the nine illustrations within the text. Immediately Corso notices various discrepancies in their artistry and reports back to Balkan who gives him the authority to buy the books at whatever cost. That's something neither owner will agree to and both end up mysteriously murdered in the manner of the more arcane etchings contained in the work they desperately want to cling on to. Meanwhile, high society hostess Liana Telfer (Lena Olin), the original owner of Balkan's copy (her husband sold it without her knowledge just before he committed suicide), is also tracking down the books for ritual use in the black magic orgies she holds at her remote French chateau. (The similarities between *THE NINTH GATE* and Stanley Kubrick's *EYES WIDE SHUT* at this juncture are truly astounding. The set decor, the masked outfits and the whole redolent atmosphere is almost too precise for comfort).

Why everyone is after the three books soon becomes clear. When the three engravings drawn by Satan from each of the three books are put together at a pre-designated location, they have the power to open the Ninth Gate and conjure up the Prince of Darkness in all his omnipotent glory. There are no prizes for guessing exactly who the devil-may-care power-crazed villain is as Polanski is more interested in the psychologically demented underpinnings of his involving story and,

“THE NINTH GATE is intensely gripping...Here's a disturbing thriller set in the threatening world of black magic that both satisfies the intellect and haunts the memory.”



Corso (Johnny Depp) discovers the body of James Russo, his partner in petty crime, as he gets sucked into a vortex of fateful evil.

more to the point, Corso's eventual corruption by his addictive quest, than the whodunit aspects of his tautly constructed supernatural stunner. However, Polanski's ominous playfulness with his barely disguised red herrings add an even more perverse punch to the proceedings and come into their own in the absolutely brilliant, burnished and hallucinatory climax which is on a spine-tingling par with Mia Farrow gazing uncomprehendingly into her offspring's cradle at the close of *ROSEMARY'S BABY*.

The carefully crafted pleasures are too numerous to mention in *THE NINTH GATE* as one knock-out set piece follows another giving full range to Polanski's artistry and talent to create a palpably moody atmosphere of sinister unease with barely hidden passions boiling beneath their surface. If Lena Olin isn't ultimately given much to do with her hellcat role apart from look fabulously well-turned out in one designer outfit

after another, Johnny Depp is perfectly cast as the opportunist book expert sucked into a vortex of fateful incidents after the weird death of his partner-in-petty-crime Bernie (James Russo). Even the unfortunate graying temples he sports to subconsciously put across the elder hauteur of his profession ceases to become distracting after a while.

Barbara Jefford is the one who steals the thesping honors, though. Her Baroness is a feisty and fearsome creation and her wheelchair demise carries the most potent charge of all in the corpse catalogue. Incredibly, Frank Langella goes on impressive manic overdrive once again as he did in *LOLITA*, but pulls it off against all the odds to mesmerizing effect. His integral part in the finale freezes the blood as Lucifer burns his soul for all eternity. Emmanuelle Seigner (Polanski's girlfriend) gives her trademark stilted performance, but here it doesn't matter as her blankness works well in the context of keeping the audience guessing over which side her guardian angel is actually on. Whether appearing suddenly in every location—usually on a motorcycle—that Corso visits or literally flying to his rescue, Seigner accidentally conjures up an enigmatic demeanor in perfect pitch with Polanski's decadent delight.

Neat visual touches (a collapsing camera signifying unconsciousness, the 666 code on Balkan's library lock) pepper the shaggy devil scenario laden with invisible special effects and seamlessly integrated computer graphic work and Wojciech Kilar's stunning score compliments every creepy moment with insouciant élan. *THE NINTH GATE* thankfully doesn't follow Hollywood blockbuster rules or any recent trend and the only really graphic moment comes when a pentagram medallion is buried in a victim's neck. Perhaps that deliberate non-conformism is precisely why it feels so fresh and scintillating. If the Devil does indeed have the best tricks, Polanski's return to form is one of his more magical examples. □

for about two months, I don't exaggerate. Eventually, he capitulated. He was so paralyzed on the first day, but I think it came out all right. It's a good fit."

No detail was spared in ensuring that the physical book of *The Nine Gates* appear as authentic as possible. Polanski knew what he wanted the engravings to look like, but finding the right person to create them was another matter. "I wanted etchings that would be very much in the style of the period, in the style of the woodcuts and the copper etchings. And we just couldn't get it." Then Polanski thought to approach Francisco Sole, who had created the illustrations for the Spanish and French editions of *The Club Dumas*. "I met him at the airport and explained to him what I wanted. He sent me the first one, and it was just absolutely great. Then we worked over the telephone from Paris. I was shooting in the daytime and talking to him on the phone and faxing him drawings, and he did them all. I think they really suit the book."

Polanski continued, "When you pick it up in your hand, in real life, it truly looks like an antique book: the paper and the color of the paper, the print and the grain of the paper. To put this book together was tremendous work. It looks like a real book, it doesn't look like a prop."

Throughout the film, Polanski was dedicated to making the fantastic feel real. "Making successful movies is all about showmanship," Polanski stated. "It's about creating the right atmosphere. Many people can visualize in their head, or talk about what they want to create on film using the right 'words,' but it's getting those adjectives, that mood you want to create, on the screen. I work on that and think about that, from the beginning. Everything else comes after." □

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